

In_Focus Evaluation



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IDRC In_Focus collection is a joint product of the Communications Division in Partnership with Programs and Partnership Branch. Its production involves a substantive but popularized and easily identifiable series of small books devoted to the summation of substantive IDRC research. Each In_Focus project comprises a book, a CD, an executive summary, a series of case studies and a website. The original thinking behind this collection was the desire to put together a colourful, reader friendly (non-academic) publication to capture the attention of policy makers. After the publication of the first project – Water: Local level management- the objectives evolved and to some extent each In_Focus project sought to reach a unique combination of target audiences.

In late 2006, the IDRC Evaluation Unit in partnership with the Communications Division contracted the New Economy Development Group (NEDG) to evaluate the In_Focus collection. The NEDG team (Wendy Quarry and Ricardo Ramirez), both professionals in Communication for Development, was asked to assess both the formative and summative aspects of the materials and to focus attention on three key productions: Seeds that Give; Eco-Health and Fixing Health Systems (TEHIP).

The team took a phased approach to manage the 5-month assignment: a preparation phase to obtain an overall impression; the formation of a detailed workplan and methodology for data collection; a focus on the formative aspects of the collection; data collection and analysis for impact assessment and final report preparation. In addition the team hosted two on-line discussions to harvest insights from development agencies worldwide involved in the process of bringing research into policy development, and in the evaluation of communication activities.

From the beginning, it was very clear that the collection resonated strongly with different audiences for a variety of reasons. Style and format received positive response; size, length, writing style, and an attractive look are well appreciated by IDRC staff members, by others researchers and academics. A particular strength has been the collection's service to IDRC knowledge management - in terms of its attractive packaging of years of substantive research. A pleasant surprise has been the popularity of the materials as training resources for universities.

The collection, however, misses the mark almost entirely for its major objective – the desire to bring research results to the attention of decision-makers. As it stands, it is not the type of product that can alone bring research results to policy. Apart from providing materials that are too long for this particular audience, the collection is not put together with the benefit of in-depth communication

strategies (audience research) to figure out *how* to reach this audience, and how to provide *just-in time-briefs* to support linkages when policy windows open.

This is due, in part we believe, to the relative isolation of the work of the Communications Division from knowledge widely held within the building and among staff in regional offices and field placements. While the collection has created an important precedent in reducing the silos between the Communications Division and the Programs -an achievement that deserves credit- there is scope for more work to reduce a noticeable in-house isolation. Some Program officers have sound developmental communication instincts that are not adequately recognized nor harnessed into communication strategies; the Evaluation Unit's recent writings on how research gets into policy, offer practical insights that have not been utilized; and the organization's relevant Communication for Development experience has not been put to work internally. Altogether, the combination of this internal knowledge could have helped bring the In_Focus collection closer to the original objective of bringing research to the attention of decision/policy makers.

We conclude that the collection is indeed very successful as a text book publishing effort, and as a tool for knowledge management. It is not, however successful as a communication strategy to reach its originally intended audience.

These findings have led us to recommend the following:

- Build on the success of a shared inter-departmental project to develop a more holistic approach to In_Focus productions
- Replace the Knowledge Pyramid with an alternative organizing framework for future In_Focus projects based on a dialogue between research and policy
- Clarify objectives
- Set clear and transparent selection criteria and charter
- Develop full communication strategies for each project
- Differentiate Ottawa Vs in-country production
- Budget for all resources from the start
- Develop a distribution tracking system
- Access multi-organizational initiatives on research/policy issues

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We are grateful to Niels Keijzer of the Pelican Initiative (a project of the European Centre for Development Policy Management) and the forum participants; the same is true for to Chris Morry and Warren Feek, of the Communication Initiative, and the forum participants.

We appreciate the time and inputs received from the many individuals and organizations interviewed, and from over one hundred survey participants. We are grateful to Dal Broadhead, NEDG for guidance and editorial advice.

A. BACKGROUND

1. Introduction and Context

Up to date research that informs policy and practice is vital in the constantly evolving field of international development. Research ensures development programmes respond to the realities of people.....As research becomes valued then effective communication strategies between policy makers, practitioners, researchers and communities becomes ever more important. For example, in the last few years key funders have started to specify that their researchers allocate at least 10% of their budgets to research dissemination¹.

The IDRC In_Focus Collection is one of the strategies put forward by the Communications Division in Partnership with Programs and Partnership Branch (PPB) for communicating and disseminating IDRC-supported research results. There were two main objectives for this initiative: 1) to present IDRC research in a synthesized and creative way to influence decision-makers in developing countries; and 2) to demonstrate to the Canadian funding agencies that IDRC research produces useful development results. After the publication of the first project – Water: Local level management- this thinking (while not discarded) was augmented by the evolution of new objectives. To some extent each new In_Focus project sought to reach a unique combination of target audiences.²

The first In_Focus suite of products, Water, Local-Level Management was published by IDRC in 2002. This was quickly followed by two other products for the collection, Health: An Ecosystem Approach and Seeds that Give: Participatory Plant Breeding in 2003. The next book, Fixing Health Systems came out in 2004. Several other books and products for the collection have followed suit in 2006 (Growing better Cities and Co management of Natural Resources) with others now in production.

The IDRC Evaluation Unit and the Communications Division together contracted the New Economy Development Group (NEDG)³ to provide an evaluation on both the formative and summative aspects of the In_Focus initiative. At their request, this evaluation has focused on three of the In_Focus collection (Ecohealth; Seeds and Fixing Health Systems) and has also reviewed the processes, review and selection of others now in production (Terms of Reference, Appendix1).⁴

¹ http://www.healthlink.org.uk/we-do/network_me2.html

² The Fixing Health Systems and Seeds kept the original objectives (and included knowledge management); Eco-Health had the different objective of introducing a new topic to a research audience.

³ November 2006 – April 2007

⁴ An earlier evaluation (2002) by Anne White and Robert Auger reviewed the impact of the first In_Focus product (Water)

1.1 Setting the Stage - the Knowledge Imperative

The importance of finding strategies to both disseminate and communicate research findings in the development context cannot be over-emphasized (otherwise what is it for?). IDRC has recognized this since its inception but more so in the past 15 years with the arrival in the 90's of tight government spending, budget cuts and (perceived) Canadian public reaction against development spending. This climate has pushed the need to connect research to policy into the realm of political imperative - to be able to show that IDRC is, indeed *making a difference!*

At the end of the 90's, IDRC adopted (and adapted) the idea of *Closing the Loop* (CTL), using the popular⁵ phrase to reflect the growing imperative to actively seek out methodologies to concretely move research into action – to figure out how to close the gap between research and policy. In his paper, Closing the Loop (CTL) and Scaling-up the Influence of Research, Peter Cooper⁶ offered a working definition of Closing the Loop within the IDRC context, namely that:

Closing the loop is an activity aimed at increasing the awareness, understanding and ownership of research outputs by decision-makers and society in general, thereby enhancing the influence of the work that we support.

The whole notion of 'Closing the Loop' thus became -in the words of White and Auger (2002) - part of the IDRC lexicon and was well established in the corporate culture including its program strategy and the job responsibilities of staff.⁷ But how to actually do this difficult task has long been a problem (not just for IDRC).

1.2 The Communications Division, the Collection Genesis and the web-print connection

The IDRC Communications Division was mainly set up to provide support to public relations and corporate affairs for the institution. The Division also housed an IDRC publications unit that was responsible for the publication of IDRC research reports, books, policy briefs and a magazine that was widely circulated amongst a host of partners, other development institutions, private individuals and corporate funding agencies.

Inevitably, in the late 90's along with the tightening of the IDRC belt, Communications Division came under the scrutiny of senior management. In an effort to cut costs, management commissioned a report on the value-added of the publications unit (Lorimer, Rowland: *Reading IDRC Books: Evaluating a*

⁵ Closed Loop Recycling (green industry); ISNAR, education (feedback to students) etc. Anne White and Robert Auger, 2002.

⁶ Director of Environment and Natural Resource Management (left IDRC 2003)

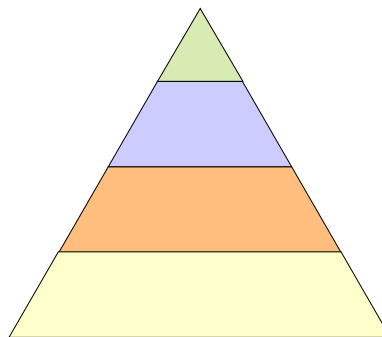
⁷ IDRC Communications Division, In_Focus Pyramid and Policy Workshops, Anne White and Robert Auger, 2002

Publishing Operation, Ottawa 2000).⁸ The results of this scrutiny were inevitable, IDRC had to cut back on the publishing option or close the operation. This meant that the publications personnel had to either reinvent themselves and the unit or lose their options. Fortunately at that time, the head of the publications unit (Robert Charbonneau) was pursuing the growing possibilities of the web for publishing/disseminating research results. He went ahead with enhancing the IDRC website sorting out the potential of web-print interface. These musings evolved and grew into what is now known as the In_Focus Collection.

1.3 Knowledge Pyramid and the In_Focus Collection

In order to deal with such a wide variety of potential audiences, the In_Focus collection is based on the idea of a Knowledge Pyramid – a concept at the heart of knowledge management that provides a methodology for presenting varying layers of content that can be accessed by different audiences⁹. In the IDRC context, the base of the pyramid presents what they call the *Grey Literature* (PI websites with research reports, library archives, external web site links etc.). Next comes peer-reviewed literature (IDRC books, journal articles, and external publications) followed by Corporate Publications, Case Studies and third from the top the In_Focus book, followed by the Web Portal (for the book) and finally at the apex, publicity around the production (press releases, Op-Ed, events, conferences, communication plans and so on). There are several different interpretations of the layers of the pyramid. Most important is the fact that anyone interested in accessing different layers of information around an In_Focus production can both read the material (in the book) and access the web and *drill down* deeper to access the layers of information available underneath.

Knowledge Pyramid, CD and Website



The top of the pyramid represents the “moment” or event to present and advertise the In_Focus material. Immediately below (blue) lie the In_Focus products and below them the web sites from where an interested person can “drill down” to access all the scientific literature on the subject lying at the base of the pyramid.

⁸ Interview with Robert Charbonneau

⁹ ISNAR also referred to a knowledge pyramid, see:

<http://www.isnar.cgiar.org/publications/corporate/annual/1996/essay.htm>

1.4 The In_Focus Collection – Making a Difference

The Collection was initiated by the IDRC Communications Division in partnership with the Programs and Partnership Branch (PPB) in 2001. It began with the first book production and a website (Water), evolved into a larger package consisting of: book; a CD (attached to cover of book); an executive summary (as a fold out pamphlet inside book); a website, and a separate package of case studies (providing evidence where the ideas within the book were successfully put into practice). To date (2007), the In_Focus Collection has a total of six projects with two more near completion.

The packages have been widely distributed through a variety of methods: given out at conferences; sent to a distribution list; carried by IDRC staff on their travels; placed in Regional Offices; sent out in response to a request, sold through the now-defunct in-house web-based bookstore as well as by distributors and through other sources or handed to visitors to the IDRC offices.

But who are these readers and what sort of use do they make of the material? Who uses the material and to what end? Is the In_Focus Collection making a difference and if so – what sort of difference with what audience and to what effect? These are the questions that led the Evaluation Unit and the Communications Division into commissioning the 5 month evaluation of both the formative (process) aspects of the In_Focus work and the summative (impact) of the final product.

2. Objectives and methodological approach

2.1 Objectives of the Evaluation

The primary intended users of the evaluation are the Communications and PPB staff who “participated in the development, research, and writing of the In_Focus books and case studies (etc.) and who have been and continue to be involved in their dissemination.” The evaluation is intended to be used by both Communication and PPB staff to help them **learn what has worked well in the formative aspects of the production and what could be improved**. The summative intended uses of this evaluation will be to determine the results and influence of the projects and the extent to which they are achieving their objectives (or achieving objectives that were unintended). The Evaluation Unit is also interested in the approach and findings as this type of communication evaluation adds a new dimension to the evaluation work of the Centre.

The Objectives are¹⁰:

1. Assess the extent to which the projects are meeting their aims and objectives;
2. Document the results of the projects (reaches and outcomes) and analyze their influence;

¹⁰ Quoted from Terms of Reference.

3. Provide reflections on the strengths and weaknesses and the process and outputs of the In_Focus projects and the communication and dissemination of the material in relation to the subject matter content and context of each field.

The NEDG team [“we” from here on¹¹] implementing the evaluation was guided by the principle that evaluations should be seen as a learning process both for the evaluators and for the people responsible for the initiatives being evaluated. To this end, a Steering Committee (SC)¹² was established within IDRC consisting of representatives from Communications Division, PPB and evaluation to guide and monitor the evaluation process as it progressed. In addition, we asked the members of the SC to develop their own learning objectives, which they summarized as follows:

- Identify and examine strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation, both in terms of the subject matter (evaluating communications initiatives) and the particular approach used. What can this type of evaluation tell us, what can we learn?
- Construct a framework for on-going evaluation of future In_Focus projects that can be integrated from the beginning.
- On-going learning throughout the evaluation process by reviewing the methodology and analyzing initial findings.
- Demonstrate usefulness of evaluation for Communications Divisions.
- Demonstrate usefulness of undertaking joint evaluations - collaboration between Communications Division and Programs Branch.
- Examine and use findings from the evaluation and implement appropriate changes in future In_Focus projects.

2.2 Methodological Approach

2.2.1 A Phased Approach

Faced with the complexity of the research topic, we proposed a phased approach to the research process. Roughly, the overall phases consisted of: a preparation phase (to get a preliminary overview of the In_Focus process and potential impact); the preparation of a detailed workplan (to guide the evaluation process in partnership with the Steering Committee); development of a methodological approach to data collection (for both the formative and summative aspects of the evaluation), data collection, analysis and report writing. Each phase was reviewed by the Steering Committee prior to moving forward from one to the next.

¹¹ Wendy Quarry and Ricardo Ramirez.

¹² Chantal Schryer (Director of Communications and Government Relations), Bill Carman (Publisher, Senior Communications Advisor), Amy Etherington (Evaluation Unit) and Ronnie Vernooy (Rural Poverty and the Environment, Programs Division).

The **Work plan** was accepted by the Steering Committee in January 2007 (the Work Plan and Time-frame appears as Appendix 3).

2.2.2 Methodology

A draft methodology was sent to the SC in mid-January and was approved in early February (see Appendix 4 for a copy of the data collection tools).

Data collection tools

The data collection tools for the formative aspect of the evaluation included: individual or small group semi-structured interviews and focus groups (Communications Division staff; whole team of people engaged in production of SEEDS). We paid attention to what was unique and what was common across the different projects. We explored the proposed uses of the different media products and the extent to which they were targeted to specific audiences (Appendix 5 includes a list of over 30 interviewees). To do this we focused on IDRC staff (both at Headquarters and at Regional offices) and on IDRC partners (we also met with 2 ghost writers).

One field trip was made to both Syria (ICARDA in Aleppo) and Cairo to allow us to meet IDRC Partners and others who had had access to the In_Focus collection¹³. This travel opened up the opportunity for face-to-face interviews with some of the potential audience for the material and widened the exploration of the In_Focus potential and use.



ICARDA scientists and Jordanian researchers reviewing the SEEDs book

The formative aspect also included a review of how similar organizations bridge the gap between research and policy through an on-line forum facilitated by *the Pelican Initiative* of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) in the Netherlands. This forum brings together researchers and

¹³ Aleppo (ICARDA researchers); Cairo (CDS, Ali Mokhtar); the Eco-Health Forum and IDRC Regional Staff

practitioners interested in methods and innovation in evidence-based learning. Our on-line session focused on the question: “Research and Communication: Bridging the Research-Policy Gap?” and ran for six weeks from February 9th to March 23rd. 2007. A dozen different contributions were received, from a list serve that involves approximately 300 members who receive the forum emails; Appendix 6 includes a summary of the findings.

The data collection tools for the summative aspect of the evaluation included: individual interviews, and focus groups discussions. These were complemented by an on-line survey monkey that was available from 9 Feb to 6 April in English, French and Spanish. A total of 105 surveys were received (85 E, 15 F and 5 S). The evaluators used email lists provided by the program division (no single database was available). The URL for the survey was also distributed through to the 12,000 emails for the electronic bulletin Research in Action. Appendix 7 includes the Survey Questions (English version).

Finally, the summative aspect also included a review of how similar organizations track the impact of their dissemination efforts of comparable products. This was done through a second on-line forum facilitated by the *Communication Initiative* from March 25th. to April 21st., 2007. This forum brings together researchers and practitioners interested in communication for development methods and innovations. Our session focused on the area of planning, producing, disseminating and evaluating the impact of advocacy or communication materials. A total of 15 contributions were received.

Analysis

Interview, group interviews and focus groups: We prepared a written summary following each session. We reviewed the data to find emerging themes.

Document review: We reviewed background reports and select publications, for example we reviewed a wide range of material from the Evaluation Unit. In one case we developed a one-page summary for ease of reference.

On-line fora: We developed weekly or by-weekly summaries to help shift the discussion along the guiding questions. A final summary was prepared, organized on the basis of emerging trends, and their relevance in the context of complementary findings from the other data sources.

Survey monkey: The three on-line survey data inputs were collapsed into a single set of numbers. The summaries that were produced will be found in the Findings section, Chapter 5.

Triangulation

We verified our interpretation of opinions by comparing and contrasting them with what we heard in individual and group interviews. We sought to match quantitative findings with anecdotal explanations. Our on-line fora gave us exposure to current practices and challenges that other development research

organizations face; and this information also served as a touch stone to formulate recommendations. The trip to Syria and Egypt provided face to face opportunities to discuss the In_Focus impact with people familiar with IDRC but mostly outside the organization.

It was unfortunate that we could not manage more face to face interviews with “users” of the IDRC collection. A trip to Tanzania was cancelled due to lack of availability of people familiar with the series and able to find the time to meet with the researcher. A trip to Mexico and Honduras was cancelled for the same reason.

3. Theoretical background and Influences that shape the evaluation

3.1 Communication for Development

When we were first approached to undertake this evaluation, we were not at all sure we had the appropriate background for evaluating something which appeared to be a public relation activity. Our own backgrounds are firmly rooted in “Communication for Development” which can be defined in a variety of ways but broadly refers to a discipline where planned communication initiatives are put in place to enable development activities. After our initial meeting with the IDRC team it became clear that the thinking and approach inherent in Communication for Development is equally relevant to the aims and objectives of the In_Focus Collection.

It is important to acknowledge that there is a range of communication functions absolutely integral to development work. These functions cross the development spectrum of approaches, from information and public relations to advocacy, social marketing, community voice and participation and affirmation of human rights.



We have encountered wide-spread confusion about these various functions and want to emphasize that no one function is necessarily better than the other – just different. To help clarify this point we have found it useful to group these wide-ranging functions into three main categories to illustrate the role and variety of communication needs and possibilities¹⁴. It is important to note that all of the functions require a two-way approach to communication exchange rather than a

¹⁴ Some ComDev practitioners would contend that the third function is the core function for ComDev and that the other two functions belong in the world of public relations and information exchange

packaging of messages aimed at a “target” audience for hoped for changes in behavior.

a) Policy communication

This function is about making rules and policies known. Governments are familiar and comfortable with this function. Communication methods are applied to provide information or raise awareness – to promote or enact a policy. Broadcast media, especially combinations of radio, print and television, are commonly used to disseminate new policies and to make regulations known. While the trend has been for this function to depend on unidirectional information flows, increasingly there is a leaning (in some countries, agencies) towards interactive policymaking - a moving away from the more traditional persuasive advertising approaches to policy.

b) Communication for sharing knowledge

This category includes the educational form of communication – a social marketing campaign or hygiene education. Transfer of technology and training packages are typical of this communication function. In the past this type of communication was also mainly unidirectional and top-down. However, increasingly it has been recognized that the trainees’ active involvement is the best way for them to learn. Today this type of communication is increasingly aimed at creating new perspectives, and to support experiential learning, rather than transferring pre-packaged solutions to passive users.

c) Participatory communication

This communication function is about listening and giving stakeholders a voice; it is about using media to document what project beneficiaries want and how they feel that the project should involve them. It is also about creating spaces for debate where problems are complex and different groups have contrasting views on how to move forward¹⁵. This function is about giving a voice to different stakeholders to engage in platforms where negotiation among different parties can take place with regard to development¹⁶.

One could suggest additional functions (eg. *time-sensitive communication* that captures the use of cell phones for price, employment or weather information; or *organizational communication* to include the internal information flows within an office or agency), but we feel that these three main functions generally cover the ground relevant for the In_Focus collection.

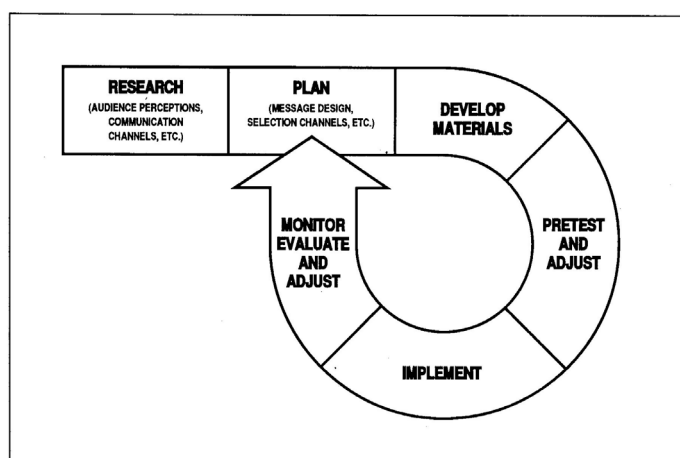
¹⁵ See a relevant example in the In_Focus project Comanagement of Natural Resources in the section on “Empowering local users through dialogue” (pp. 12-14)

¹⁶ These categories are adapted from the original source: Rölíng, N.G. 1994b. Communication support for sustainable natural resource management. *IDS Bulletin. Knowledge is power? The use and abuse of information in development*, 25 (2), 125-133.

When we talk about *Communication* we also refer to a *planned* communication approach that can support a range of programme implementation needs through several complementary functions. We stress the word *planned* to emphasize the importance of being proactive in plotting out carefully constructed communication inputs to enhance program/project implementation. Communication planning covers the following steps: clarifying objectives; understanding the context; determining the audience; audience research; designing materials and methods; field testing; implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

In the past, it was common for projects to start by designing materials without addressing the first steps. The audience research step is probably the biggest gap in this rushed approach. Experience has shown that the 'ad hoc' approach to communication inputs mostly results in failure: In Pakistan, the manager of a water project decided that it might be 'useful' to provide a documentary video on water use. Without any research or planning to determine what the video would achieve, a producer was hired and the video was put together at great expense. After one showing to less-than-interested water sector decision-makers, it has remained on the shelf – a testimony to failed and wasteful enthusiasms.

The following chart summarizes a similar sequence of steps in a cyclical manner to emphasize the importance of constant course-correction on the basis of field-testing and monitoring and evaluation¹⁷.



Clearly then, we began the process of assessing the formation and impact of the In_Focus collection by asking ourselves: were the objectives for each product clearly defined? Were the intended target audiences identified and most importantly, was there a form of research with each audience to first understand what he/she already knows about the subject and what he/she would now like to hear – and through what channel of communication does this audience best respond to evidence?

¹⁷ FAO. 1989. *Guidelines on communication for rural development: A brief for development planners and project formulators*. Rome: FAO

3.2 Other influences

Two other sources have influenced our thinking, one in the area of the research-policy process, and the other in the field of *change*. In 2001 the Evaluation Unit commissioned a series of research activities that led to an information resource entitled “Making the Most of Research: Research and the Policy Process”¹⁸. We have made use of this material since it is germane to the evaluation of the In_Focus series. In particular, one of the papers prepared by Linquist provides a useful review of the sources of literature on this subject.

Finally we would like to acknowledge a debt to Malcolm Gladwell. His book, *The Tipping Point*, takes a populist approach to the difficult question as to what it is that helps bring about change. His insights into the mysterious factors that contribute to the theory of change have provided a great source of ideas. In particular he points to the critical role of *champions* that are able to support change; he describes what he calls, *a sticky message* which can cling to people’s minds and combined provide *the tipping point* to create a groundswell of opinion to change direction.

¹⁸ http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-94849-201_102624-1-IDRC_ADM_INFO.html

B. FINDINGS

4. Formative Findings – the Process

This section summarizes the process by which In_Focus projects are developed. Each sub-section begins with the main Findings [in bold], followed by a summary of the evidence and closing with observations of what worked and what can be improved [in italics].

4.1 The Evolution of the Original Objectives

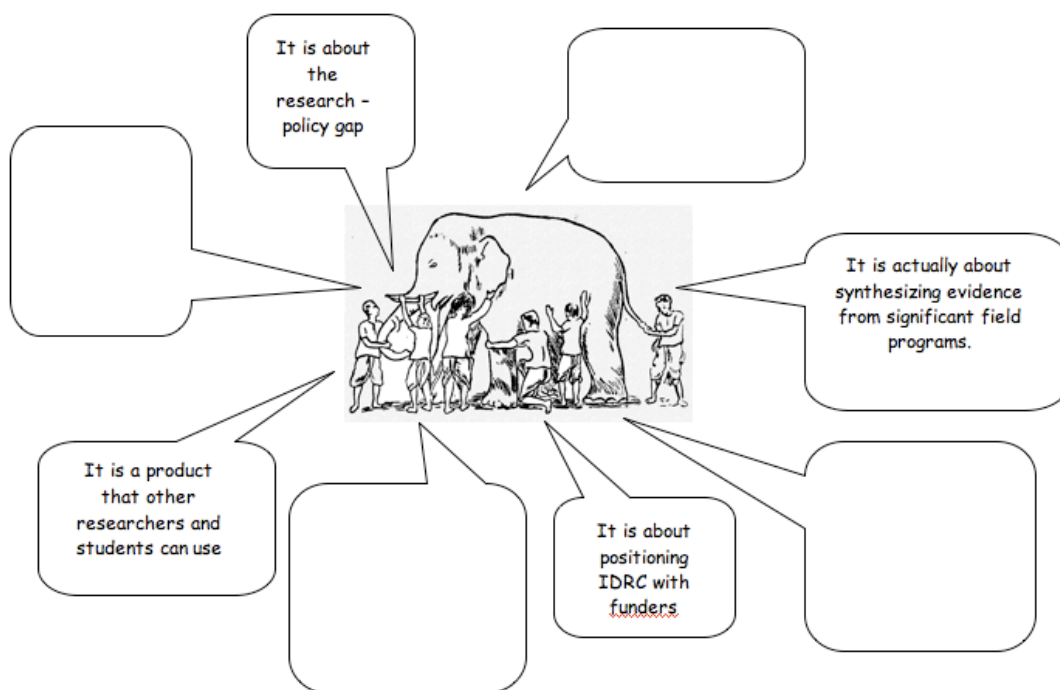
What started out as a way to package research results to influence policy soon came to represent different things to different people.

The original In_Focus concept was based around two key objectives (the need to bring research to policy, and the need to demonstrate (in Canada) that IDRC research has played an influencing role on the policy agenda of developing countries). The evolution from the original objectives was acknowledged by the Communications and Programs staff, who signaled that the 2002 White and Auger report contributed to this shift. The In_Focus charter states that while the overall objective and target audience (for each production) must reflect the Centre's thrust to communicate to its primary audience of decision-makers and policy advisors, it does not pre-determine other objectives that may evolve. As a result, each production has been put together with quite a variety of other objectives¹⁹. Here are some examples of the differing objectives.

Objectives	Example
A method to bring together the print and web interface to breathe new life into publications	Seeds, TEHIP, Eco Health
A type of positive 'trojan horse' that helps Communications and PPB work together around a common purpose	Seeds
A way to ' showcase ' and package 10 years of IDRC collected research	Seeds and Water
A methodology for program reflection and review for future directions	Seeds
A celebration of achievements	TEHIP, Water
A way to influence researchers around a theme	Eco-Health & TEHIP
A means of helping move a partnership towards ownership	<i>Moving beyond TEHIP</i>
A way to capture a body of knowledge before a staff member leaves (Water) or a program is closed	Urban agriculture, Water
Helping local Partners gain credibility by association with the products	Eco-health
To popularize a way of thinking for general public	
To promote IDRC expertise with donors and governments (fund raising)	TEHIP
To influence decision makers	

This led us to think about the old story of the elephant and the 6 blind men trying to figure out the nature of the beast (see illustration below).

¹⁹ The original policy maker audience was soon replaced with the objective of reaching decision-makers who might influence policy makers



The six "blind people" story and the In_Focus collection

Observations- what worked

Although the need to bring research to policy was the original purpose for the In-Focus collection, it really is the 'tail of the elephant.' Nevertheless, this initial purpose set the wheels in motion for a set of materials that has served many other relevant objectives.

Observations – what can be improved

In communication planning, being clear from the beginning about the objectives of the initiative is a must. The more specific the objective, the easier it is to identify the key audiences, design the material to suit each audience and monitor and evaluate outcomes. The lack of clarity around each product objective means that there is no clearly defined tracking process to find out whether the intended objective has actually been achieved.

4.2 Selection and rejection

The selection and rejection process is fluid; it follows some explicit criteria but is subject to different interpretations about the objectives of the collection.

After a period of trial and error, the Communications Division developed a set of instruments to both set out selection criteria and to set forth conditions for the production of a project (A Charter). We soon found, however that this criteria was often ignored and the Charter was neither fully developed nor strictly followed.

The first product, Water, Local Level Management (2002) by David Brooks came into being with the realization that Brooks, about to leave the organization, would take with him at least 10 years of research-based knowledge on water management. It thus became imperative to capture the body of knowledge that Brooks had accumulated over his years at the institution. The book then became a legacy that could be used within the organization (knowledge management) and could provide a showcase for IDRC funded research having an impact on a development agenda. The twin objectives of capturing knowledge and providing a showcase of IDRC impact on development also provided the incentive for the Fixing Health Systems (TEHIP)²⁰ production (2004). TEHIP captured the learning from IDRC supported health research in Tanzania (at the stage when TEHIP was about to move on) and provided the means for presenting a body of knowledge to help influence others adopt the process.

The product that was initiated immediately after Water, Seeds that give (2003) built on an in-house evaluation of 10 years of research support to the field of “Agro Biodiversity” that drew attention to the body of knowledge accumulated within the SUB Program Initiative (PI). This PI was about to be subsumed into a new program initiative as a result of an in-house reorganization. Ronnie Vernooy, who co-wrote the Seeds material, commented that the process helped the SUB team to take stock of the work accomplished, come to a kind of “closure” on the body of experiences accumulated, and look ahead in terms of identifying emerging and novel research questions.

At least three out of the six published In_Focus works were either written by a person about to leave the organization (David Brooks and in the case of Co-management of Natural Resources (2006) written by Stephen Tyler) or the program was to either be shut down or move to a new phase. Conversely, the second published product, Health, An Eco-system Approach, by Jean Lebel (2003) was an attempt to *introduce* a new topic to a body of researchers gathered at the Rio + 10 conference in Montreal. IDRC had been identified as the key source of knowledge on Ecosystem Approaches to Human Health and was asked to advise three Canadian government departments (Environment, CIDA and DFAIT). Thus it was felt that this would be a prime opportunity to reach Canadian decision-makers. The product was fast-tracked to be able to distribute it to the delegates in Montreal.

In the final analysis, it is very unclear (and not necessarily important) as to who is positioned to initiate an In_Focus production. It is also not clear as to the role of senior management in either pushing or rejecting certain initiatives.

²⁰ Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project.

One common feature that has emerged, however, is clarity that every In_Focus production must be based on an in-house body of research that can stand up to scrutiny of both the IDRC Corporate Management and the public that might be reading the documents. The recent example of the decision not to publish the completed product on Medicinal Plants bears testament to this criteria. In the final analysis, management decided that the accumulated knowledge was not supported by sufficient evidence to go to publication. This in part reflects the important public relations aspect of the In_Focus collection, which leads us to observe that a more explicit definition of the selection criteria from the beginning would be beneficial

Observations-what works

Given the trial and error initiation of the Collection and the findings that emerged from the experience (and perhaps from the early evaluation of the Water project), the Communications Division worked out a selection process. As noted, this included a document on Selection Criteria and a Charter to spell out the process and division of roles and responsibilities between divisions for the production of a product (Appendix 9).

Observations- what can be improved

Notwithstanding these criteria for project selection, the process itself has been open to change. Moreover, the Charter does not mention a fundamental requirement for any communication initiative – that is the need to develop a communication strategy²¹ that clarifies the objectives of the initiative and identifies (and research) the key audiences. In other words, the Communications Division started with phase three of the basic communication planning process (designing the materials) without benefit of the first two steps which would/should heavily influence any future design. As was underlined by a few contributors to the Communication Initiative forum, this approach is common across many organizations: while it allows the production process to begin early on, it fails to base message and media selection on the basis of audiences' needs. It also means that –since audiences are not well known- evaluating impact becomes difficult.

4.3 The Writing Process

The writing process calls for a significant time investment by staff and an average *production* cost of approximately \$77,000 for the English version of a project.

People involved in the writing and production process (from Programs and Communications) stress the significant amount of time and effort that is required to produce an In_Focus project.

²¹ Item 4 mentions “a communications plan”, though the examples we viewed were mostly dissemination plans.

Phase One: selection and writing (6 months to a year)

Someone from Programs, Communications or Senior Management initiates a topic for selection. Thereafter, the Communications Division²² meets with the person from the Program (who will be responsible) to discuss topic, time-frame and roles and responsibilities (outlined in the In_Focus Charter (Appendix 9). The Charter (which acts as a contract) is later signed by the head of Communications Division and the Director of the Program Division after an *iterative process* to help both parties more fully understand the process. A ghost writer is assigned to work with the Program person who will be responsible for producing the first draft and working with the ghost writer to finalize the product (Communications Division has recently started the use of a story-board process after the first meeting with the ghost writer). An outline for the booklet is put in place and circulated amongst the Divisions. Once approved the drafting begins. The first draft is sent to the person in Communications responsible for the product²³ for review (there are now different writers in the Division assigned to the project). The final draft is sent for an internal review (senior management, team leader, Legal department, and staff in field offices, head of Policy and Planning and head of Communications). On occasion a draft will be sent for an external review (for example, Eco health was sent to Environment Canada).

Phase Two: Revision and final drafting (one month)

The comments received from the internal review are incorporated (about a month) and after a second internal review the manuscript is approved and ready for publication.

Phase Three: Production (four months)

The production phase is a time when Programs Branch steps back and Communications Division takes over. The next phase of work involves the editing of text; translation into French (or English) and Spanish; re: contracting the ghost writer to write the Case Studies²⁴ and initiation of the work on the web site (the head of publications does all the web site work however the Program person is responsible for providing material for the pyramid base). This involves putting together the images and slide shows for on-line viewing (so far the capability to use video is not available – there are only links to video). The booklet and case studies are printed (following the design laid out in the early days of the Collection). Case studies are 8.5 x 11, 4 pages with glossy print. On average, the first print run is for 2500 – 3000 *English copies. plus 1500 copies for each of French and Spanish.*

²² Usually Bill Carmen who is in charge of publications

²³ It used to be Bill Carmen but now individual writers within the Division are assigned to each product

²⁴ There is variation in this order: in the Seeds case the case studies were drafted first.

We prepared a rough approximation of costs on the basis of the numbers provided by IDRC (see Appendix 10). These numbers are indicative because not all costs are tracked in the same manner: for example translations are paid for by a separate unit from Communications²⁵, and reprints can be paid for by the Programs Branch.

Observations- what worked

The In_Focus writing process reduced silos (see Section 7) between the communications and program units; it created a common goal that is of benefit to the staff of both units.

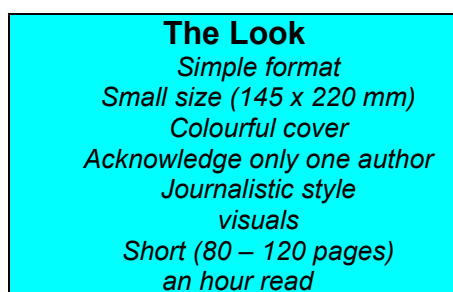
Observations- what can be improved

There is a considerable amount of investment in an In_Focus project (\$77,000). The costing estimates, however, do not include person time nor distribution expenses. This means that the organization has only a very rough estimate of actual costs. This situation needs correction when it comes to assessing the relative cost and expected benefit of future projects (see relevant recommendations in Section 8).

4.4 The In_Focus Format

The In_Focus collection has been produced with very clear guidelines on style and format.

The books in themselves are small, compact, highly visible and written in a language accessible to a wide range of audiences²⁶. The case studies are 3 – 4 pages, glossy with plenty of photographs, as is the executive summary, the CD contains information to broaden that contained within the book and all is linked to what is published on the IDRC website, which links to other webs websites opening up a vista of information for the interested reader.



The publication unit limit of one author per book stemmed from the perception that the book represented “the face” of IDRC to the general public. With this view, it was important (to the publication unit) that one author (from IDRC) be identified with the book. That one author was to become the IDRC spokesperson for the subject.

²⁵ The Seeds translations in Nepal, Syria and China were paid through the PPB


²⁶ Written by both Program staff and a “ghost writer” selected by Communications Division.

Conversely, the people in the Program Branch viewed the book both as a summation of knowledge and as a vehicle to share experience with local partners. They wanted to give recognition to the fact that their knowledge was *shared* knowledge that came through their partnership with local research teams. That this is important is evidenced by the outright refusal on the part of the Canadian authors for Fixing Health Systems to go forward with production without reference to their Tanzanian partners.

Once the writing of the In_Focus book is complete, the publication division takes over the production process and begins development of the new subject's position within the IDRC website and the accompanying CD. Work on the related In_Focus website is done in collaboration with the Programs Branch.

The In_Focus collection is readily available from the main page of the IDRC website. Each project link leads to an Executive Summary page with links to sub-sites with: The Issues; the Case Studies; and the Lessons Learned. Additional links lead to slide shows and video clips, as well as additional resources. It is the place to dig down into the knowledge pyramid. The book can be read on-line or downloaded directly from the site (which works for dial-up connections as well). A common design has been applied to each project in the collection, and within each project all the materials follow a common look. This common design works to brand the collection as an IDRC product.

The case studies document specific in-country experiences and serve as a complement both to the book and to the websites. While the latest guideline is to limit production to six cases per project, in the recent past the number has gone as high as 12 for the Ecosystem project. Several field users who were very pleased with the book were unaware of the case studies and mentioned the need for additional field evidence. The case studies are often produced under contract with a field partner. Their name and organizational contact information appears in

THE ISSUE	CASE STUDIES	LESSONS LEARNED
 <p>What is "participatory plant breeding" and how can it contribute both to increasing the productivity of resource-poor farmers in the developing world and to enhancing agricultural diversity?</p> <p>Overview (slide show)</p> <p>Part 1 of Seeds that Give: Participatory Plant Breeding</p> <p>Resources on the issue</p>	 <p>Project stories and research results illustrate how farmers and plant breeders are working together in remote regions from the Andes to the Himalayas and beyond.</p> <p>Overview (slide show)</p> <p>Case studies: North Africa and the Middle East - Latin America - Cuba - Nepal - China - Global</p> <p>Resources on PPB research</p>	 <p>A decade of research leads to a series of specific recommendations for governments and organizations involved in agricultural research and development.</p> <p>Overview (slide show)</p> <p>Executive Summary of Seeds that Give: Participatory Plant Breeding</p> <p>Resources on lessons and recommendations</p>

the back cover under the box “for more information”. This accreditation gives the partner a good opportunity to become known and have co-ownership over the case studies.

Observations- what worked

We found that the overall design (colour, size and format) resonated with a wide range of interviewees (ICARDA researchers did comment that they wished for more graphs and pictures and that the cover should definitely have a picture).

The Program staff are among the most supportive users of the collection. They travel with books and CDs and proudly give them away like business cards²⁷. Having a synopsis of research so professionally packaged gives them a respectable product to leave behind. Moreover, when someone asks about a project, this package is an ideal way to respond.

As a tool for IDRC public relations and packaging years of IDRC funded research, this colourful and attractive design has been welcome. Several of the partners interviewed remarked that the very fact that an idea is packaged into a well designed book and website with the IDRC logo gives the approach and content credibility and helps them promote the subject.. The collection has also hit a nerve in unexpected audiences. Most notably, universities and academics from a variety of countries have picked up copies by the boxful. The easy, journalistic read has greatly appealed to this audience (even academics seem tired of academic writing) who use the materials as a tool to attract students to a subject.

We acknowledge that there are moments when policy makers may actually be led to read a synopsis of the contents and the easy feel of the book could be a great help. Unfortunately we have not been able to uncover any evidence where this has actually taken place. One person interviewed, who did mention the materials to a federal Member of Parliament, did not feel it was appropriate to actually provide the materials to the MP even though they were in this person’s possession.

Observations- what can be improved

The In_Focus creation team has made a fairly classic move by designing a product and then hoping that the product will suit the initiative. This is not an uncommon practice (“let’s do a video”) that has repeatedly led to failed efforts (books on shelves, videos growing mold and posters used to wrap fish). We hastened to add that the In_Focus design has not led to widespread failure, not by any means. By all accounts the product design is very well received by a variety of readers. All depends really on what is its intended use. In a standard Communication Planning process, the design of material comes

²⁷ An interview with a staff member in the field led us to discover that there is a CD containing all In_Focus books the products under a Development Dossier cover.

AFTER the audience research since only then is it possible to thoroughly understand how an audience perceives and receives information (in what form and when).

The publication division insistence on acknowledgement of only one author (from IDRC) is not viewed favourably particularly by those involved in the production process. There is room here for a more flexible approach that incorporates some field dimensions that are important - namely that good projects often emerge from close interactions in the field and that communication products that share those lessons need to reflect the team effort.

4.5 Distribution

The distribution process was treated as a publishing activity as opposed to something that is part of a more holistic communication process involving different levels of actors and audiences. A missed opportunity is the lack of a data base of users eliminating the possibilities for effective monitoring and evaluation. Despite this, the effort has been significant enough to require reprints of the books and case studies.

The books and CDs have been distributed through the following channels: They are available at headquarters and regional offices for visitors to pick up, they are distributed to partners by traveling staff, they are launched at conferences and workshops and copies are given out from IDRC booths. Copies are mailed by the unit or in larger numbers at the request of users by mail or email. In a number of cases, copies are sold, though there are no criteria to differentiate who gets a free copy and who pays for one. The names or contact information of recipients have not been documented in a systematic manner (for the purpose of this evaluation we were able to access e-mail contact information from staff, from lists of individual buyers and from workshop participant lists).

The Communications Division produced *Communication Strategies* for the projects, most of which came out after the book was underway. The strategies list objectives, target audiences and a promotion plan. There is no specific matching of objectives, audiences and media. In reality these Strategies more resembled *Distribution Plans* rather than Communication Strategies.

There are examples, however where Programs branch made a point of playing its own role in a separate distribution process. A good example of this is the Seeds production where the Program Branch deliberately set funds aside (prior to production) to ensure a role for local partners in the distribution process.²⁸

²⁸ A call went out to Partners for proposals to use the funds for local distribution. As a result 4 Partners (in Nepal, China, Cuba and Syria) translated the material into the local language (except for Cuba since the material was already produced in Spanish) and developed local methods to enhance the distribution (in China short briefs were produced for policy makers and in Cuba a music CD was used to promote the ideas contained in the documents).

Observations- what worked

The experience with local distribution contracts for the Seeds book may serve as an example of the value of locally led production and distribution efforts (although the lack of reporting requirements make this difficult to confirm). In addition, Program Officers also appreciated having a flexible approach to distribution.

Observations- what can be improved

Overall the Communication Strategies more resembled Distribution Plans since they were put together after production began and did not contain detail on much more than how books would be distributed.

Beyond the short-term satisfaction of giving something away, there is a missed opportunity: we were only able to contact a fraction of those who received the materials. A communication opportunity becomes a one-time broadcast action, and –as this evaluation confirmed- when it comes time to learning whether the product was used and how, we are left only with workshop lists to chase up and scattered emails with (mostly glowing) responses²⁹.

There is an implied assumption that exposure to information equals learning and thereafter acting differently which is mostly not the case. There is scope for integrating approaches that focus evaluation efforts around outcomes.

4.6 Factors that shape In Focus projects

There are many different factors that influence the initial decision to create an In_Focus product. These factors continue to shape the production from the writing through to eventual distribution and eventual impact.

We have seen that there are different factors that come into play to influence the initial decision to create a product (around a particular research subject). These factors and others have also played a role in influencing the writing, production process and dissemination of the different products and their eventual outcomes.

The following summarizes some of the factors we identified: The level of the originator in IDRC; Event-driven; Solid field evidence; One country project; Program staff with communication instinct; Champions in IDRC or in country; A “sticky message” (drop in child mortality rates); Relationship with partners; Field partners packaging and distributing locally and Staff departing / status of program.

In most cases, a combination of the factors worked together. For example, one project (Eco-Health) moved ahead quickly as a result of high level support,

²⁹ This issue was raised in the 2002 Report “In-Focus pyramid and policy workshops” by Ann White and Robert Auger, Mestor Associates.

coupled with an event (Rio + 10) where the project could be launched. In another (Water) it was the combination of solid field evidence and the upcoming departure of a staff person that motivated the production. In Seeds it was the combination of a program evaluation that drew attention to the subject and the presence of an active champion who used his instinctive communication skills to enhance the distribution process. Fixing Health clearly had what Malcolm Gladwell would call the combination of a “sticky message”³⁰ and active champions to promote the project.

Observations – what worked

In the case of TEHIP a combination of factors has made the project well known: it has had an impressive team of champions behind it. In our interviews, their dedication and vision was evident. They also had a project with resources to alter the context and provide targeted support to two district health initiatives. Third, they developed effective tools to match district health data with appropriate funding which led to significant impact. The impact: a 40% drop in child mortality, was a very “sticky message” that allowed the team to create change process beyond the two focus districts. The In_Focus materials were greatly appreciated by the IDRC champions as a means to package a solid field experience and make it readily available beyond Tanzania.

Observations- what can be improved

Success for an In_Focus project is possible thanks to a system of contributing factors. Communication materials on their own have limited value³¹, but they can catalyze the work of champions and legitimize new approaches in a significant manner. Future work in communication and publications can build on this systems approach, with an explicit definition of the factors that are most relevant in each program or project situation.

³⁰ The notion of a “sticky message” is borrowed directly from Malcolm Gladwell’s, The Tipping Point. Gladwell suggests that ideas can gain widespread adoption when they combine a **sticky message** (whether it is solid evidence or a good marketing slogan), with a **change in the context** (often this is what projects achieve on the ground as “policy experiments” – case of TEHIP). In TEHIP the “sticky message” is the lowered child mortality rates as a result of the approach

³¹ Attention to TEHIP did not originate with the In_Focus production. It was the combination of the several factors mentioned in the text plus a feature article in The Economist that catalyzed wider appreciation.

5. Summative Findings – the impact

In this section we report on the impact of the In_Focus collection as reported in the on-line survey and interviews. Each section begins with the main Findings [in bold], followed by a summary of the evidence and closing with a observations [in italics]. We mention the impact of the collection inside IDRC in terms of breaking down internal silos.

5.1 Casting the net

Altogether we sent out over 800 e-mail invitations to the on-line website and received back a total of 105 surveys (85 English, 15 French and 5 Spanish). A significant number of rejected e-mails were returned, but the actual number was not tracked. Out of that total, 82 respondents (78%) indicated the country where they had spent most of the last year:

Algeria	3	Jordan	5	Regions	No.	%
Argentina	2	Kenya	2	Canada	29	35
Bangadesh	1	Lao PDR	1	Latin America	12	15
Bolivia	1	Mexico	3	Caribbean	0	0
Brazil	1	Morocco	1	N Africa	8	10
Cambodia	2	Nigeria	1	SS Africa	10	12
Canada	29	Pakistan	1	Middle East	6	7
China	1	Philippines	3	S. Asia	6	7
Colombia	2	Senegal	1	SE Asia + China	7	9
DR Congo	3	Switzerland	1	OECD	4	5
Dubai	1	Tunisia	1	Summary		
Ecuador	1	Uganda	1	Can+OECD	33	40
Egypt	3	UK	1	Africa	18	22
Ethiopia	1	Uruguay	1	Middle East	13	16
Ghana	1	US	2	L.America+Carib	12	15
India	4	Venezuela	1	Asia	6	7

Although we note these figures in terms of percentages, we must bear in mind the actual numbers that the percentages represent.

Over half (54.7%) were researchers, teachers and professors, followed by 22.1% high level decision-makers (directors, managers), 20.9% advisors to decision-makers, 9.3% students, 7% self-employed (and 11.6% other). With regard to the type of organization they work for, 23.3% were in public education, 22.1% in the public sector in general, 15.1% in national NGOs, 10.5% in international NGOs and 8% in bilateral and multilateral agencies. In terms of sectors, 48.2% were in natural resource management, followed by 24.7% each for both higher education and health.








In terms of gender, 55.7 of all respondents were male, and 44.2% were female. The numbers of Canadian respondents were the opposite: 64.% women Vs, 35.% male.

The In_Focus projects that were best known to the 105 respondents were: Health: An ecosystem approach 50 (47.6%), Comanagement of natural resources 17 (16.2%), Seeds and Water both at 14 (13.3%), Fixing health systems 7 (6.7%) and Urban agriculture 3 (2.9%)

5.2 Coming to know about an In_Focus project

A direct connection with IDRC, namely a staff person or project, was the main mechanism through which people came to know of an In_Focus project; while the IDRC website was the second one.

The bar chart below shows these numbers.

1. How did you COME TO KNOW about the In_Focus product?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Through my involvement with IDRC projects and staff		44.8%	47
Through the IDRC website		25.7%	27
A colleague referred me to it		5.7%	6
I heard about it in a conference or book launch		3.8%	4
It was mentioned in an on-line network or forum		2.9%	3
It was hyperlinked from another site		1%	1
Through an on-line search using a browser		3.8%	4
I found the book at a library		1%	1
As part of a course		0%	0
<input type="button" value="View"/> Other (please specify)		11.4%	12
Total Respondents			105
(skipped this question)			0

If we only look at the surveys filled from Canada (28 in total), the main mechanism for Canadian users to come to know about the In_Focus materials was also through their involvement with an IDRC project or staff (over 39.3%³²). The second source (14.3%) was a colleague and the third was either the website or a book launch (both 10.7%).

The bar chart below shows these Canadian numbers.

³² The actual number is higher as 3 of the 4 responses under "other" listed IDRC staff or IDRC itself.

1. How did you COME TO KNOW about the In_Focus product?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Through my involvement with IDRC projects and staff		39.3%	11
Through the IDRC website		10.7%	3
A colleague referred me to it		14.3%	4
I heard about it in a conference or book launch		10.7%	3
It was mentioned in an on-line network or forum		0%	0
It was hyperlinked from another site		3.6%	1
Through an on-line search using a browser		3.6%	1
I found the book at a library		3.6%	1
As part of a course		0%	0
<input type="button" value="View"/> Other (please specify)		14.3%	4
Total Respondents			28
(filtered out)			77
(skipped this question)			0

When we only look at the 17 Canadian researchers, professors or teachers who filled in surveys, 29.4% reported having come across the In_Focus materials through their involvement with IDRC project or staff. The second mechanism (17.6%) was through a conference or book launch, with colleagues as the third source (11.8%).

On the other hand, two of the 3 Canadian respondents who were “Advisors to a decision-maker (policy advisor, technical staff)” came across it through the website (the third one worked for IDRC)³³.

Observations

The fact that involvement with IDRC project or staff is the main mechanism for users to come to know about the In_Focus materials is important in several ways. Even when books were distributed in large numbers at conferences, the network of users that we were able to track was most reliable through staff emails. This suggests that IDRC staff and projects remain a major communication channel that has not yet to be harnessed as the main link with users of In_Focus products.

5.3 Materials most commonly used








The book and CD, and the website are the most commonly used materials in the In_Focus collection, followed by the case studies. This finding applies both to all respondents and to Canadian ones, although the percentages differ. The case studies are very popular among developing country users.

³³ None of the Canadian respondents were high level decision-makers.






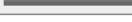
In some cases, like the Seeds book, the case studies were the first materials produced.

The In_Focus materials that were **accessed by all respondents** were: the book and CD (57.7%), website (55.8%), case studies (34.6%), executive summary flyer (27.9%), slides (7.7%), CD only (7.7%) and on-line video (2.9%).

The In_Focus materials that were **accessed by Canadians** were: the book and CD (69.6%), website (65.2%), case studies (56.5%), executive summary and flyer (39.1%), slides (13%), CD only and on-line video (4.3% each). The chart below shows that survey respondents mentioned the book+CD and the Website as the two most popular materials that they accessed³⁴.

3. Which In_Focus MATERIALS did you access? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Executive summary flyer		27.9%	29
Book and CD		57.7%	60
CD only		7.7%	8
Case studies		34.6%	36
Website		55.8%	58
Slides		7.7%	8
On-line video		2.9%	3
Total Respondents			104
(skipped this question)			1

However, if we look at the data for only four developing countries (India, Jordan, Senegal and Mexico) we get a different pattern with the case studies as the most popular, as shown in the chart below.

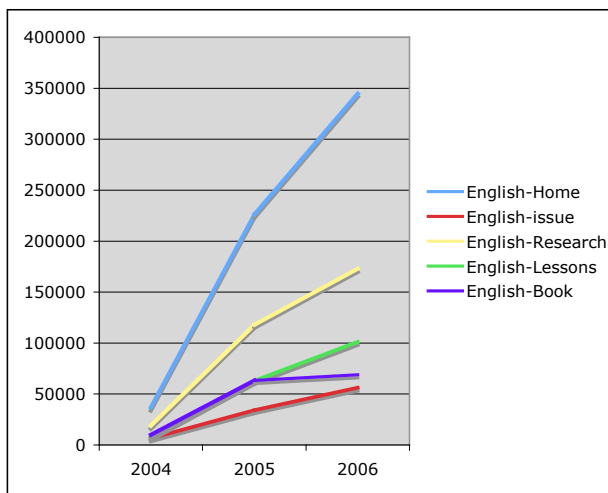
3. Which In_Focus MATERIALS did you access? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Executive summary flyer		38.5%	5
Book and CD		46.2%	6
CD only		15.4%	2
Case studies		53.8%	7
Website		30.8%	4
Slides		15.4%	2
On-line video		0%	0
Total Respondents			13
(filtered out)			91
(skipped this question)			1

³⁴ An on-line search to track citations in refereed journals and books for Fixing Health Systems was done using the Web of Science <http://isiwebofknowledge.com> but the results were inconclusive.

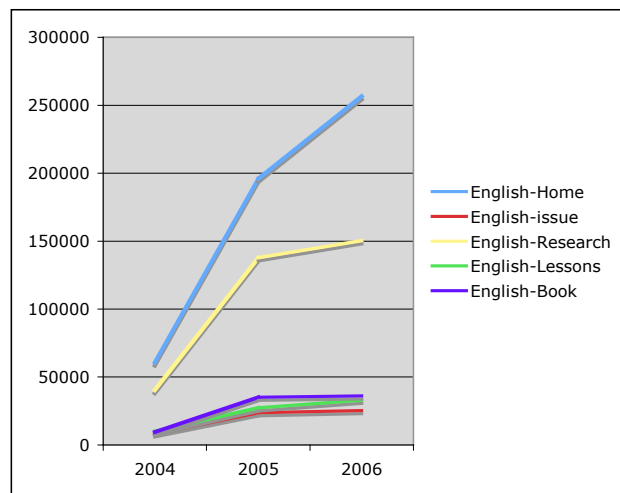
In terms of the volume of use of the website, we focused on a single statistic: page views per years. The web statistics for the three projects all show an annual increase in the number of page views/year. This is especially the case for the Home Site and for the Research sub-site (the latter sub-site is where the case studies are located). The other sub-sites for the book, for Issues and for Lessons, all show a leveling off in terms of page views/year in all languages.

The total number of page visits per English language site, per year, is shown in the charts below, with the 2006 annual total number of page views per year in brackets. The same patterns were found for the French and Spanish websites (Appendix 11 includes additional web statistics.).

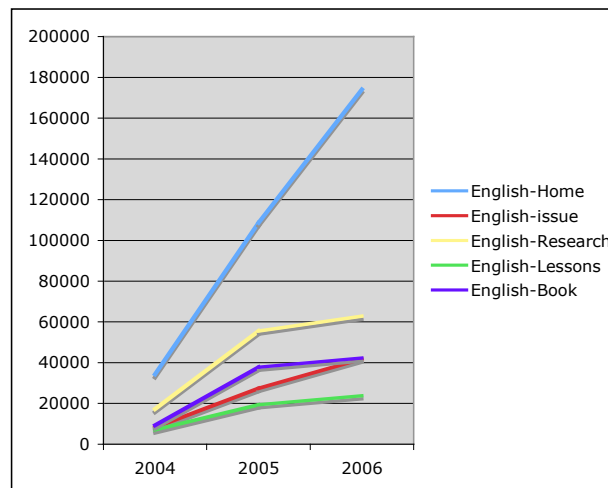
Fixing Health English (350,000/year)



Health: an ecosystem (250,000/year)



Seeds (170,000/year)



Observations

While the website is among the top materials accessed, its relative importance depends very much on the audience – especially their level of connectivity. In our interviews we heard that the website was a very welcome

resource but that connection times for many users outside urban centres remained a limitation. We do note that the on-line survey will be biased in that it comes from the most connected users. We also heard several cases where the users had received the book but did not know a CD existed, which may be a reflection on different practices regarding the packaging of the CD with the book across the different collections.

With regards to the volume of page visits to the websites, across the three projects profiled in this evaluation, the average number of page visits to the English sites for 2006 was 250,000; a number that could become a threshold indicator for future web site planning. In terms of the sub-sites, a possible explanation for the popularity of the Research sub-site is that a) it includes the case studies, b) researchers are a most popular category of users, and c) that this sub-sites are updated more often than others.

5.4 Time spent on the In_Focus materials

More than two thirds of users reported spending more than 1 hour using the materials.

Over thirty-seven percent of respondents spent more than 3 hours using the materials, with 36.5% of them spending between 1 and 3 hours, and 23% under one hour.








Observation

The short format for the book was designed to be read in about 1-2 hours, so this finding suggest that the readers may be able to at least read most of the book. We did not ask respondents to specify the time spent on each material, but it stands to reason that these replies would match the most used materials (book and CD, website). Beyond that we cannot be more specific on length of access to the websites as the web statistics kept at IDRC do not include length of visits.

5.5 Navigation through the pyramid and utilization

The two main entry points into the knowledge pyramid were the book and the executive summary.

As the chart below shows, just under a quarter (24%) of all respondents first read the book and then looked at the CD. Beyond that 22.1% reported first reading the Executive Summary and then looking at the other materials; 10.6% did not go beyond the Executive Summary. Next, 16.3% first looked at the book and then at the website, while 15.4% of respondents first looked at the case studies and then at the book. An additional 6 respondents mentioned the website as the main entry point under “other”.

7. How did you MOVE from one media product to another?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I only know the executive summary flyer		10.6%	11
I first saw the executive summary flyer, then I referred to the others		22.1%	23
I first read the book, then glanced at the CD		24%	25
I first read the case studies, then the book		15.4%	16
I first read the book, then glanced at the website		16.3%	17
I first saw the website and then ordered the book		6.7%	7
<input type="button" value="View"/> Other (please specify)		16.3%	17
Total Respondents			104
(skipped this question)			1

In at least 3 interviews with Latin American users, we were advised that they had the book but had never realized there was a CD nor had they followed up on the website URL that appears in the book.

Of the Canadian respondents, 21.4% first read the case studies and then the book, and the same amount first read the book and then looked at the website. This was followed by 14.3% who first read the book and then glanced at the CD; the same number first read the Executive Summary and then the other materials; while 7.1% did not go beyond the Executive Summary. Lastly, 10.7% first looked at the website and then ordered the book.

In terms of the utilization 37.9% read the materials and made use of them in their writing, followed by 25.9% who read them for general interest. This was followed by 22.4% who skimmed through them, or used them to advise or brief a decision maker (22.4% as well). A further 19% used them in support of training or teaching, and only 5.2% had yet to review them. Under the “other” category, 3 out of the 6 comments mentioned the use of the materials for preparing proposals.

The 18 respondents (13%) who are advisors to decision-makers reported using the materials as follows: 33.3% read them and made reference to them in their writing, 33.3% read them and used them in support of training or teaching, and 33.3% used them to advise or brief a decision-maker. Among researchers,

professors and teachers, the main use (46.8%) was for reading and making reference in their writing, followed by 31.9% who used them in their teaching.

Observation

Beyond the book and the executive summary as main entry points, there was a fairly even distribution with regards to other entry points. However, the popularity of the case studies by developing country readers also deserves mention, though it does not seem to be a major entry point into the pyramid.

5.6 Referral to others

More than half the respondents have referred the materials to between 1-10 other people.

More than half the respondents (51.7%) have referred the materials to between 1-10 other people. This is followed by 24.1% who do not refer it to anyone, 15.5% who refer it to more than 25 others, and 6.9% each that refer it to between 11-25 or add a link to their own website.


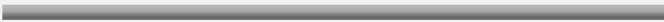

Observation

There is a significant multiplier effect in terms of the number of people who are able to access In_Focus materials beyond the first user.

5.7 Opinions from users

5.7.1 Close to 90% of respondents indicated that the language level was just right, a finding that was confirmed further through our interviews.

Overall, 88.5% of respondents felt the language was just right, only 10.3% thought it was simplistic. When we only look at researchers, teachers and professors (45% of all respondents) the numbers remain essentially the same (87.2% just right; 14.9% simplistic).

9. How did you find the LANGUAGE and level of analysis?			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Simplistic		10.3%	9
Just right		88.5%	77
Difficult to understand		2.3%	2
Total Respondents			87
(skipped this question)			18

82.1% of Canadian respondents felt the language was just right, and 14.% felt it was simplistic. When we only look at Canadian researchers, teachers and professors, the numbers remain comparable with 76.5% judging it to be just right and 23.5% finding it simplistic. However, there were suggestions from field workers for even simpler materials for working with farmers. Two respondents in Central America who work directly with farmers noted that language level in the Seeds book is simpler than most books, which they welcomed. They both added that in future, an even simpler language level would help them work closely with

farmers. They are producing their own manuals, and one of them emphasized that they could use some help in the design and production of these publications in-country.

Observation

The acceptance of the language level is a significant achievement. For those projects where there is close interaction with people at the grassroots (eg participatory plan breeding) there is scope for additional, simpler, locally-produced materials.

5.7.2 What was most liked

With regards to what was most liked about the product, 67 responses were received out of which 23 (34%) were complimentary of the style; 21 (31%) were complementary of the content and analysis, 7 (10.4%) appreciated the format and targeting for different users; 6 (8.9%) noted the value of the case studies; and 5 (7%) were pleased with access. Appendix 12 includes the coded responses.

5.7.2 What was least liked

With regards to what was **least liked** about the product, 53 responses were received, 23 (**43%) signaled that they had nothing to complain about;** 9 (17%) had concerns with presentation; 7 (13%) had concerns with evidence and content; 4 (7.5%) had concerns with the practicalities of implementing the approaches; 3 (5.6%) had concerns with style and the same amount had concerns with the case studies. Appendix 12 includes the coded responses.

Members of an Eco-Health Collective in Africa mentioned the need for an update to the Eco-Health book. They observed that it lacked sufficient concrete material outlining actual application of the approach in the field. This was further observed by people in Central America who expressed a lack of evidence for future action.

With regards to the design and ease of use, the following are some comments received about the site from our interviews and survey:

- Awkward to navigate (donor)
- Slow to access if on a dial-up (field partner)
- Menu on the top left is very hard to read on a Mac (donor)
- CDs do not work on a Mac
- The Web version was difficult to read, and I had referred others to it.
Would be helpful if it were available as a PDF (survey)

5.7.3 Recommendations for the future

In our question on general **recommendations for the future**, 25 entries were received, with no clear pattern or direction. Appendix 12 includes the coded responses.

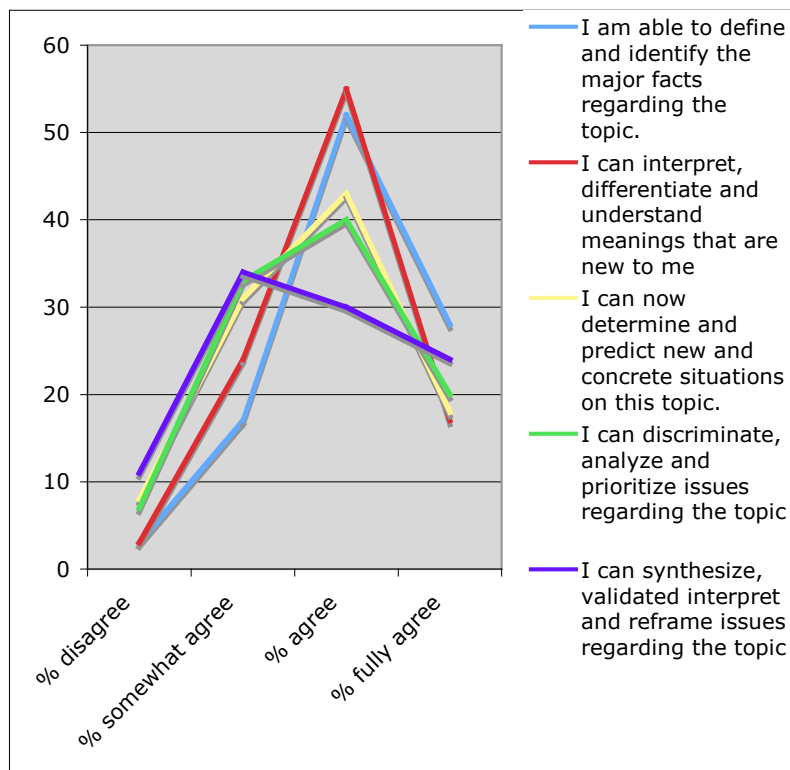
Observation

Overall users are very pleased with the style of the materials, with only a few critiques and recommendations for future modifications.

5.8 Outcomes and relevance

The level of learning outcomes achieved was significant.

We asked respondents to rate four levels of learning that they had achieved from reading the materials. The levels were based on Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (where "defining" and "interpreting" refer to more basic cognitive achievements, whereas "discriminating" and "synthesizing" are the most demanding). The graph below shows the highest "I agree" ratings (52% and 55%) were reported for the two more basic educational levels of achievements, with the mid-level ones reaching 43 and 40% levels, and the most demanding 30%.



Observation

While these numbers can only suggest a general trend, they do confirm that the level of learning outcomes achieved was significant. They also suggest that further activities and resources would be necessary for users to achieve the more demanding levels of educational achievement.

6. What other organizations do

6.1 How other organizations bridge the research-policy gap

The on-line forum hosted by the Pelican initiative yielded relevant examples about how other development organizations are addressing the research-policy gap. It was emphasized that effective communication of research often builds on **existing relationships of trust with policy makers**, which provides the building blocks for more critical engagement. In addition, it was mentioned that while there is already some understanding about how policy makers access 'evidence' on communication and development, and some useful studies are available, **there is a need to further 'demystify' the policy making process.**

Healthlink's website includes successful examples of research informing practice. This work is part of a **"Monitoring & evaluation communicating research group"** which has reviewed different cases of M&E in research communication. Their website emphasizes that as research is being increasingly recognized and valued, more attention to, and funds for, effective communication strategies between policy makers, practitioners, researchers and communities become available.

Reference was also made to a study of 150 policy makers where attention was placed on learning how they understand and access evidence. **The ICD Knowledge Sharing and Learning Programme** focuses on processes that engage policy makers. The initial stages of the programme, which included a scoping study, have shown that information and communication needs of policy makers go beyond the provision of evidence. There is a need to engage policy makers and enable them to use the evidence to inform policy."

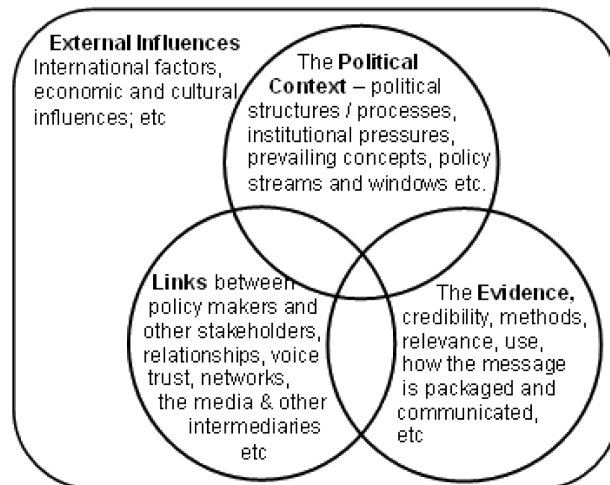
ODI's RAPID work has also led to the **'Research into Use' (RIU) programme** established in July 2006. This effort aims to better integrate the supply 'push' and demand 'pull' elements of national and regional 'innovation systems', and through an emphasis on "information markets" aims to pay attention to both the demand and supply sides.

In addition to the on line forum, we talked to several organizations focused on the research policy connection. In particular, **the Guttmacher Institute**, engaged in in-depth research and advocacy around controversial health issues, has put a great deal of effort into this subject. They have developed what they call, *an innovative and interactive communication approach to make data accessible and build stakeholder involvement*.³⁵ To make this possible, the institute focuses on research that is timely, produces credible evidence and is demand-driven (research that is actually required by policy makers). They also promote networks of policy makers, advocates, researchers and other to follow the progress of the research. Lastly, they produce quality evidence that is packaged in a range of

³⁵ Croce Grealis, M, 2006.

formats to suit the different stakeholders (who asked for the research in the first place).

ODI's Research and Policy in Development Program (RAPID) provides a framework that emphasizes the importance of the “links” and network of trust through which evidence can be made available to policy makers (<http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid/Index.html>).



The TEHIP project has led, among other things, to the development of a second generation of projects in East Africa, among which we became exposed to the **Reaching for Health Policy initiative (REACH)**. The REACH framework begins with two pyramids: one capturing the world of the researcher and the other the world of the policy maker. The researchers' pyramid is similar to the one used in IDRC, while the policy one is inverted, signaling issues and demands from the user perspective. The REACH framework then combined the two into a cycle to illustrate the close interrelationship needed to make the two systems compatible.

6.2 How other organizations track the impact of dissemination efforts

The Communication Initiative (CI) (www.communinit.com) hosted a 4 week, targeted on-line discussion forum on the 'Impact of Disseminating Advocacy and Communication Materials' (from 25 March to 20 April, 2007). The purpose was to gather examples of how similar organizations track the impact of dissemination efforts of comparable products. We requested examples of their approaches to: planning; producing; disseminating and evaluating the impact of advocacy or communication materials.

The specific objectives were:

- *To gather experiences from a range of development organizations regarding their “good practice” (and we expect many variations therein) both in terms of production and dissemination of information materials. On this same vein, to hear about how they are closing the inevitable gap between that idea, and*

their "real world experience".

- *To hear about approaches in the testing stage and /or already in use to track the use of the materials. How are the communication strategy objectives worded? How are outputs, differentiated from outcomes, and form longer term impacts? How is the elusive challenge of limited causality addressed?*
- *To gather accounts of successes and failures in the integration of communication objectives and audiences into communication materials.*

During the first week we heard from eight different contributors from different fields (4 in agriculture, 2 in health, 1 in rights based approaches, and 1 in communication for development). The following is selected references to contributions that responded closest to our question.

Question 1: What is your organizations' formal methodology in terms of the steps you follow in planning, producing and dissemination information and communication products? What difficulties have you encountered in sticking to this methodology and how have you managed to keep to it?

More than one contribution contrasted a "fast approach" that is focused on production and dissemination of materials with a "full approach" that begins *"...with stakeholder meeting, audience analysis, baseline survey, message design, pre testing, material production, high profile launching, materials distribution, monitoring management survey, post launch survey and finishing with a review workshop.* (Heong). The full approach was reported to yield significantly more benefits, and yet there is often pressure among researchers for the fast option.

This comment was complemented by a health communication practitioner in India. She confirmed the tendency to dedicate significantly more time and resources to material production than to dissemination.

Our colleagues at John Hopkins reminded us of kits that are available for planning and evaluating information products and services in the health field. The Communication Initiative (our forum hosts) reported on how they disseminate information about communication to 68,000 members of the network. Their efforts to track the value through an on-line survey (July 2006) was filled by 2,334 participants.

We concluded that there *are* approaches available that work, and while they require a lot more resources than the "fast" alternatives, they yield significant results: *"...cultivation of local ownership, local understanding of the issues, actions, objectives and purpose, building commitments across stakeholders from policy makers to implementers, leveraging local support* (Heong)."

During the second and third weeks we turned our attention to the issue of dissemination:

Question 2: Can you share the wording of the communication objectives that you base your dissemination strategy on? What accomplishments can you share in terms of how these objectives help you monitor or track the performance of your dissemination strategy?

We challenged the forum participants to share approaches in the testing stage and / implementation phase to track the use of the materials; we asked: How are the communication strategy objectives worded? How are outputs differentiated from outcomes and from longer term impacts? How is the elusive challenge of limited causality addressed?

During this week we were directed by our CI hosts to the publication "From research to practice: A knowledge transfer planning guide" that proposed 5 key principles for communication planning (determine: messages, target audiences, the messenger, the transfer method, and the expected impact). We then heard from the Filmmakers Trust in Zimbabwe who emphasized the importance of participation in defining messages and producing videos. The Trust sees the actual video's as *output*, while the participation by "target audiences" in their own video production and utilization leads to ownership over the process of social change. This is at the heart of what was perceived as the outcome.

We then received the John Hopkins "Conceptual Framework for the provision of information products and services" with a 4-stage approach (reach, usefulness, use, intended long term outcomes) that included a useful summary of indicators with relevant examples. We took special note of the language they chose to signal that the communication effort will at best be a 'contributor' to the long term outcomes - when in the past, practitioners and researchers were so concerned with demonstrating a direct causal relationship. We felt that this thinking was consistent with the "Outcome Mapping" approach developed by IDRC's Evaluation Unit <http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-26586-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html> Outcome mapping places more emphasis on documenting short term outcomes, and acknowledges that in the long term, project activities will be *contributing* to the desired goals along with many other factors that we cannot control.

For the last week of the forum we focused on experiences combining communication objectives and multiple audiences, we asked:

Question 3: What is your experience integrating communication objectives and multiple audiences into single or standardized communication materials or packages? What has been your most pleasant surprise and your biggest disappointment? What recommendations can you share?

Once again we heard from Filmmakers Trust in Zimbabwe who explained how

the Trust uses the participatory approach to screen materials that have been produced for multiple audiences. During the discussions and deliberations the content (or material) that is deemed inappropriate to this particular group of audiences is removed. In other words, the Trust includes a pre-testing stage to make sure a package is suitable for use by multiple audiences.

In addition, the Trust noted that they have been able to integrate “...*communication objectives and multiple audiences into single or standardized communication materials...*” In their experience such packages can work. They noted how an educational video can be seen from different angles and how it can touch different users in unique ways. This, in turn leads to multiple desirable and unpredictable outcomes. They noted that it is their practice to specify anticipated outcomes at the beginning of the project. At the same time they have discovered that in the process most of the outcomes are unpredictable because of the interaction between the audiences and the media messages that takes place when the participatory approach is used. From this experience they recommend a communication model for social change that is flexible and responsive to the audience. They underlined that the “...*participation of the target group is important as it not only makes them identify themselves with the project, but also with the solutions and hence is sustainable.*” We took note that the emphasis on ownership resonated with the comments by Mr. Heong in the Pelican forum.

On a final note, we received a valuable contribution from a person with experience in the Caribbean agricultural research field. This contribution pointed to the familiar problem of the need to educate senior management to the importance of communication first before focusing on any external audience. This thought was answered from Zimbabwe with the comment that it is not the lack of knowledge but lack of *will* that prevents management from supporting the communication and participatory approach. Both acknowledged that the end result was a lack of proper funding for the communication process.

Observations

In summary, we learned that other organizations have experimented with quick approaches that focus on production in contrast with “full approaches” that follow the communication steps outline in section 3.1. The full approaches that include audience research, pre-testing, definition of concrete outcomes and specific dissemination plans, yield significant benefits among which is emphasized ownership over the process and outcomes. One participant emphasized the need for audience participation in all of these stages, and that person’s experience with this approach echoed the one referred to as the “full approach” in terms of ownership over the process and outcomes. In both of these cases, the materials were clearly seen as outputs, while the learning and social change was the ultimate impact sought.

We benefited from learning about a “Conceptual Framework for the provision

of information products and services" with a 4-stage approach (reach, usefulness, use, intended long term outcomes). We took special note that the short term achievements (reach, usefulness and use) were proposed as the easiest to plan for, while the longer-term outcomes were acknowledged to be more difficult to document. We also noted that the difficulty of attributing a causal relationship between communication materials and impacts was consistent with other evaluation approaches that are less focused on demonstrating attribution.

C. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this evaluation we have come to appreciate the major efforts put forth by those engaged in all aspects of production of the In_Focus Collection. We have seen that what began as a communication device for getting research into policy has become, instead, a very successful tool for knowledge management. As such, it is widely appreciated by IDRC staff, Program Partners, other researchers and academics.

As it stands, the In_Focus collection is not a realistic method for bringing research results to policy objectives. Policy makers are known to have a short time line to read any new documentation – and much depends on the window of opportunity to get that information across.³⁶ Only those close to the policy maker can know this and he/she must be wooed by much more than literature to heed the advice.

7. Institutional Learning – breaking silos

As we set out to evaluate the effectiveness of the In_Focus collection (particularly in the formative part of the evaluation) we could not help but get a glimpse into the institutional personality of IDRC both as an organization (particularly at headquarters) and some of its components (Communications, Programs and Evaluation). In doing so, we were struck by the amount of knowledge contained within ‘the building’, but simultaneously concerned that so much of the learning did not appear to circulate within and across Divisions. In sum, the whole did not seem greater than the parts. This, of course, is a common problem in many organizations but it seemed to us to be particularly painful in an organization whose *raison d’être* is about research and knowledge dissemination. The cheerful answer to every comment we made on this was that indeed IDRC did work in “silos” and that it is much less partitioned than it used to be!

On a positive note, the production process of the In_Focus material actually institutionalized a degree of cooperation between Programs and Communications Division. The focus on a common project created a space for collaboration that was appreciated by both parties. An element of sharing had to take place during topic selection; writing and publication. Ironically the dissemination phase sometimes reverted back to silos when in fact a greater sharing would have greatly improved the process.

We have already noted that the PPB Seeds more-considered dissemination efforts through local partners was handled quite separately by the Program. This

³⁶ The Head of Communications notes that a key moment can be an article in the front page of the local newspaper that may catch the eye of a ‘policy maker’ in the car on the way to work

represented a loss of learning for the Communications people who appear quite isolated from Program realities. Conversely, a visit from a member of Communications Division to the TEHIP project in Tanzania resulted in a desire to champion the In_Focus production and created a stronger sense of 'ownership' within the Division to the outcome of the material³⁷.

We also found that the In_Focus work (despite having the overall objective of getting research into policy) makes no reference to the body of knowledge recently accumulated through the Evaluation Unit (2001) series of studies on how research gets into policy.

Similarly the Unit's work is directly relevant to future monitoring and evaluation efforts to track the impact of projects by the Communications Division. As was verified through the CI discussion on the organizational need for monitoring and evaluation (Section 6), the emphasis on measurable outcomes is relevant

IDRC's work on Communication for Development (situated within the Program Branch) has produced a volume of work on the important steps required for any communication planning process, albeit for researchers in the field. However what could be considered to be good practice for the field has not crossed over to the communication planning process for the In_Focus collection.³⁸ Indeed, these materials, if translated into Spanish, would be of great interest to the field staff interviewed in Central America who voiced an interest in training for local production of communication materials for farmers.

It is ironic that a review of the three In_Focus projects selected for this evaluation immediately shows that the main messages coming out of all three books basically stress the same points:

- the importance of taking a holistic approach to a development issue
- the need for a systems approach and,
- the importance of participation of all stakeholders.

These three closely-related points reflect the thinking contained in the communication planning process and are, in short, ideas behind most 'good' development.

8. Reflection on the Objectives

We have structured our first set of conclusions in response to the objectives of this evaluation, followed by the Learning Objectives that were developed by the Steering Committee.

³⁷ The Communications Division 2005 – 2010 strategy proposes greater partnership between Communications and Programs branch

³⁸ Popularize, Produce, Disseminate, reference sheets for a field researcher, 2006

The objectives of the evaluation:

- Assess the extent to which the projects are meeting their aims and objectives;

The original objective of bridging the research-policy gap is not being met. However other objectives have emerged that are being met. The collection has served a knowledge management role and is of use to researchers, teachers and practitioners. A clarification of objectives and a systematic communication planning process is a priority at this point.

- Document the results of the projects (reaches and outcomes) and analyze their influence;

Although our survey findings and interviews indicate that the materials are welcome, it was extremely difficult to uncover and document actual outcomes. The Communication Strategies developed for each project did not spell out measurable outcomes for each audience. The lack of a database meant a significant effort to track down users. We were unable to schedule sufficient interviews to justify trips to Honduras, Mexico or Tanzania; we sent approximately 800 e-mail invitations for the on-line survey and obtained 105 responses, and we contacted approximately 4 people for every single interview completed. We sense a lack of ownership over the process and materials outside those IDRC staff that were directly involved in the production of materials. The examples about how other organizations address communication planning and evaluation, combined with the in-house experience in these fields; suggest that there are practical, tested alternatives that can be considered in the short run.

- Provide reflections on the strengths and weaknesses and the process and outputs of the In_Focus projects and the communication and dissemination of the material in relation to the subject matter content and context of each field.

While a consistent design look has been maintained, each In_Focus project has evolved in a unique manner. The strength of the process has been a design and language style that is very accessible and welcomed by a wide variety of users. In addition, we note that the ability to organize material around mature research and emerging approaches in a manner that attracts researchers, teachers and practitioners to support their own work (applied research, teaching or introducing new approaches into organizations) has lent considerable strength. A weakness has been the lack of context and content-based design considerations. For example, the needs of a practitioner working on participatory plant breeding, is bound to be different from those of a university professor in the health sciences, or a planner in a public health organization, yet the multi-media mix has been kept uniform. At the crux of this matter is an unacknowledged combination of objectives that are difficult to reconcile into a standardized product: support to

policy advisors, institutional memory, and advocacy for innovative methodologies.

The learning objectives by the SC:

- Identify and examine strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation, both in terms of the subject matter (evaluating communications initiatives) and the particular approach used. What can this type of evaluation tell us, what can we learn?

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of evaluation to every communication initiative. This has been the subject of many text books, a long on-line forum discussion facilitated by the World Bank and the Communication Initiative and full time discussions at conferences. That being said, it is a step that is often more in the plan than in the execution. Evaluating outcomes and impacts of communication processes is a difficult undertaking since it is rarely possible to identify change in behavior, knowledge, awareness as the sole result of the communication activity. That is why building in monitoring and evaluation tracking system from the beginning of any initiative is so important since it forces the planners to think through what it is they are actually hoping to achieve.

This evaluation was seriously hampered by the absence of any monitoring and evaluation plan within the In_Focus production process. It was further hampered by the lack of clarity of In_Focus objectives; lack of communication strategies to identify and segment key audiences and research into present knowledge, attitude and practice of those audiences to provide any kind of baseline from which to measure results. The In_Focus materials were disseminated broadly through a scatter gun approach which rendered it nearly impossible to track down actual users of the materials to gain any comparable insight into what was and was not learned through the material.

The resources shared in both on-line fora, and the IDRC in-house evaluation expertise are relevant to this discussion and deserve to be brought to bear in future In_Focus projects.

- Construct a framework for on-going evaluation of future In_Focus projects that can be integrated from the beginning.

The methodology applied to this evaluation project was unique to the nature of the first six In_Focus projects. Some of the tools that we used have the potential to be adapted. However, an evaluation framework would need to be developed *together with* a “full-approach” to communication planning, not as an afterthought.

- On-going learning throughout the evaluation process by reviewing the methodology and analyzing initial findings.

Any outside evaluation will cause some stress, therefore emphasizing its learning potential should enhance its constructive contribution. We sought to include the Steering Committee into a learning process by: requesting and obtaining their approval for the methodology before its implementation, requesting they formulate the learning objectives [that we are responding to here], sharing initial perspectives during our few face-to-face meetings, sharing the final on-line survey site summary, and by sharing the draft report ahead of the end-of-project date.

- Demonstrate usefulness of evaluation for the Communications Division

The Communications Division appears to be at some kind of turning point and open to change in its structure and approach to the communications needs for the organization. Its original sole focus on corporate communication and public relations isolated the Division from the actual programming and research work; the *raison d'être* of the organization. We have noted the service that the In_Focus production played in helping break down this isolation, as does the plan to team communication staff with programs branch to work together on program communication requirements. We believe that this evaluation (done jointly with Evaluation, Programs and Communications) is another example of “closing the gap.” We see that the willingness to work together through the evaluation and expose these questions is both brave and useful. We trust that the evaluation will be used as a vehicle to put all these issues on the table and will act as a further catalyst to change.

- Demonstrate usefulness of undertaking joint evaluations - collaboration between Communications Division and Programs Branch.

It is our expectation that this report responds to these two objectives jointly; not only for the Communications division, but also to further motivate the Evaluation Unit to participate in future joint activities. Most importantly, we see that Evaluation Unit and Communications should/must work closely together (with Programs) on developing joint strategies for “getting research into policy.” The Communications Division should be tapping into the findings and resources from the Research to Policy Study generally, not necessarily just the people in the Evaluation Unit. The learning from the Evaluation Unit work on this issue, the skills (including publication and networking skills) of the Communications Division and the ground knowledge (and relationship building) of the Programs branch must be brought together to achieve this objective.

- Examine and use findings from the evaluation and implement appropriate changes in future In_Focus projects.

We turn our attention to these in the next section on findings (conclusion and recommendations).

9. Recommendations

Each recommendation appears in bold text followed by a rationale and possible suggestion for action. While the recommendations are listed in a linear fashion, the reader will realize that they are often interrelated and will require concerted action.

Build on the success of a shared inter-departmental project to develop a more holistic approach to In_Focus productions

The first recommendation (breaking silos) is based on the assumption that the In_Focus objective (bringing research to policy) remains important. It will be useful to develop a practical methodology to bring the collective knowledge within IDRC to the attention of all involved in the In_Focus material.

One option would be to set up a one- time working group involving key people from all Divisions. Work out the modalities of bringing together the knowledge from each Division to enhance the practicalities of In_Focus meeting its key objectives. Consider that future smaller groups with a similar mix will be struck around each new In_Focus production. The smaller focus groups will have a collective responsibility for developing a communication strategy that will include the learning from all divisions.

Replace the Knowledge Pyramid with an alternative organizing framework for future In_Focus projects based on a dialogue between research and policy

The Knowledge Pyramid concept caters to different categories of users by presenting a variety of levels and formats for each. In this sense it echoes some of the principles of communication planning. The concept has been useful to IDRC in structuring the collection of materials for different audiences. Where it differs from communication planning, however, is in its structure. The pyramid is a useful way to structure the presentation of information, but it remains supply-driven. It has a prevailing one-way flow of information from the different source (anywhere in the pyramid) to the user, which sets the stage for a broadcast approach to materials dissemination that has no in-built cycle of monitoring and evaluation (except of course for this evaluation consultancy). It therefore follows that a second challenge is in the lack of or limited audience research and pre-testing phases.

Clarify objectives

We documented the range of objectives for the In_Focus collection and noted that several of the objectives were less about communication and more about knowledge management. While both objectives are valid, it is important to clarify this *at the very beginning*. This makes it much easier to match communication objectives with functions (policy; educational; participatory) and opens the way to match functions with different media and methods to reach different audiences (we noticed that participatory communication, a field where IDRC has a particular strength, is not visible in any of the In_Focus productions).

If we look refer back to the table in Section 4.1, we can see how the different objectives call upon different communication functions (and approaches). This could influence a decision as to whether the In_Focus methodology (as it is now configured) is or is not the ideal way to move forward with production. For example, if the objective is more about celebrating achievement (educational) than the Collection book is clearly effective. If, however the objective first and foremost is to influence decision-makers (policy) than a different set of methodologies will apply.

Project	Objectives
Fixing Health Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A celebration of achievements • To promote IDRC expertise with donors and governments (fund raising) • A way to influence researchers around a theme
Eco-health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping local Partners gain credibility by association with the products • A way to influence researchers around a theme
Seeds that give	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A methodology for program reflection and review for future directions • A way to 'showcase' and package 10 years of IDRC collected research (educ • A type of positive 'trojan horse' that helps Communications and PPB work together around a common purpose
Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A celebration of achievements • A way to capture a body of knowledge before a staff member leaves • A way to 'showcase' and package 10 years of IDRC collected research
Urban agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A way to capture a body of knowledge before a staff member leaves (Water) or a program is closed
Beyond TEHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A means of helping move a partnership towards ownership
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To popularize a way of thinking for general public
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To influence decision makers

This analysis confirms the flexible and evolving set of objectives behind the In_Focus collection. It also underlines the importance of working with each audience and understanding their specific information needs, media preferences and moments when they can access and put the materials to use.

Set clear and transparent selection criteria and charter

Once the objectives of the overall collection are clear, it will be possible to review the selection criteria and charter and make as many of the variables that influence an In_Focus project explicit and open to a focus group discussion.

One idea would be to create a focus group at the start of each production. This would bring together Communications Division, Evaluation Unit and Programs people with past and potential ghost writers. The point would be to offer an opportunity for full discussion on the process of an In_Focus production. Here the group could share experiences from past In_Focus initiatives and sketch out potential work load for all people who will be involved in the production process – veterans of the process brief the new candidates - manager and writer from the Program to help them get a full picture of what will be required. More importantly, time would be spent teasing out clear objectives for the project, identifying key audiences and assigning individuals to research how those audiences receive information. In addition, the focus group would integrate findings from the Research to Policy Study into the planning. Thereafter a small inter – division team could manage the process.

Develop full communication strategies for each project

A communication strategy relates to the objective of the production and can include: identification and segmentation of key audiences; assessment of knowledge and information needs of each audience (baseline); development of material and media channels to reach each audience; field testing of material, targeted dissemination and utilization activities for each audience group, and monitoring and evaluation planning.

We found that the most effective communication channel available to IDRC is its collection of champions (this includes staff in Ottawa and in regional offices, partners in the field who are working closely with projects) and communication strategies must focus on making their [communication] work most effective.

As Healthlink reported in the Pelican forum, the key to successful communication strategies includes and acknowledges the importance of dialogue. In other words, the IDRC champions need materials to leave behind after a workshop or good dialogue. Second, there are windows of opportunity, which means that some partners (policy advisors) only become available during short incidents; and we need to be ready for them. Third, a close knowledge of the context is a must, which means we need to rely on audience research and an understanding of local coalitions of interest before we develop communication materials. Fourth, while it is common for decisions based on political expediency rather than evidence, we still need evidence.

Communication strategies are complex. It can be useful to use a two-dimensional

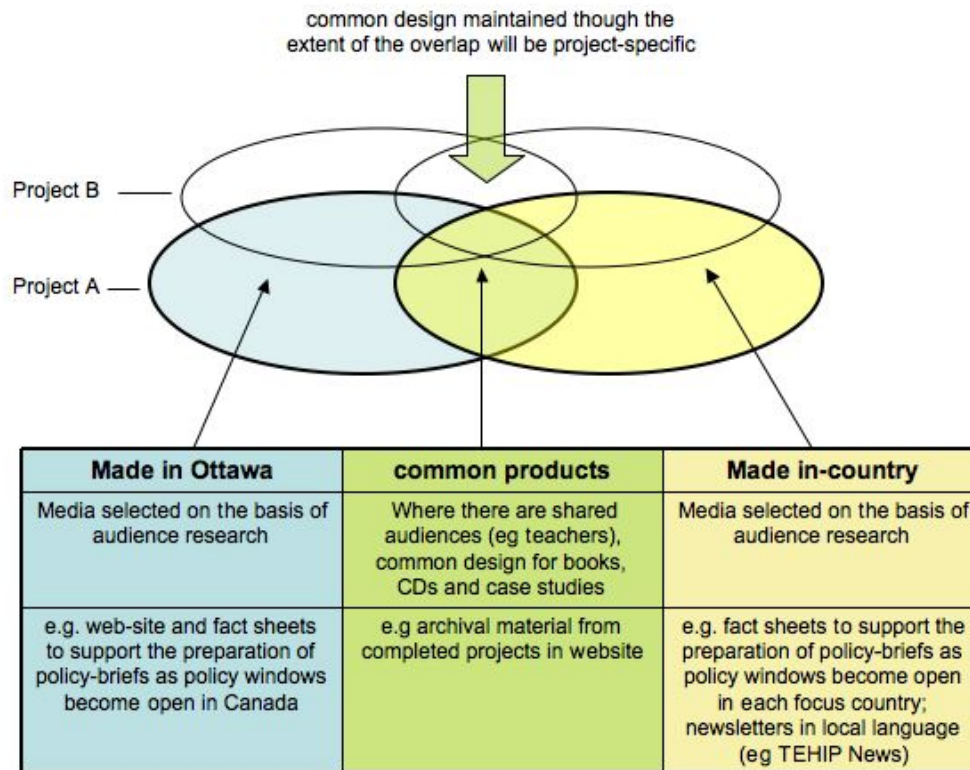
matrix where key messages are matched with specific audiences, materials (media product), production responsibilities, pre-testing plans, utilization/distribution plans, outcome indicators, and costing estimates.

Communication Objective 1: To maintain IDRC's relevance in the eyes of the Canadian Parliament								
Key messages	Target audience	Material(s)	How is it used?	Where is it produced?	How is it tested?	Distribution	How do we gauge impact?	On what basis do we budget?

Differentiate Ottawa Vs in-country production

Our findings and our Communication for Development experience both suggest that communication materials are most effective when produced with -or closest to- the intended audience. This recommendation builds on what has already been tested in terms of in-country dissemination (eg the SEEDS dissemination contracts in China, Cuba and Nepal). It also builds on the fact that projects and partners already produce additional communication materials, often to fulfill several objectives in tandem. TEHIP produced a local newsletter and specific publications locally in both Swahili and English. A respondent in Honduras reported having produced manuals for farmers and requested additional technical assistance in this process. IDRC has significant experience in this area through its Communication for Development publications.

IDRC-Ottawa could produce those materials that respond to knowledge management objectives (eg In_Focus projects that include an organizational archival objective), as well as materials intended for Canadian users (eg fact sheets for the timely drafting of policy briefs; website to profile organizational achievements, training guides for teachers and faculty). At the same time, IDRC could focus efforts in select countries where partners are best positioned to produce and disseminate materials for their priority users. The following diagram elaborates on the possible split for the Ottawa VS in-country production that would allow the organization to maintain a common design to the materials.



We suggest at least three parallel production activities: materials that are directed at Canadian audiences should be produced in Ottawa; while projects should be able to do that same in-country. Common products with a common design remain appropriate when there are shared audiences with common needs (e.g. teachers). We feel books are the most likely to remain in the middle column because they respond to two objectives: internal knowledge management, combined with dissemination to a broad practitioner-academic population. On the other hand, a close consultation with teachers may lead to proposals for a second generation of publications that are specifically developed for training programs. Each case will be unique, and where the overlap between Ottawa and in-country production is too small, there may be room for separate communication efforts to be developed outside the In_Focus collection.

Budget for all resources from the start

An In_Focus project has three main resource dimensions: person time & production costs, distribution & utilization, and evaluation costs. Up till now, IDRC has kept track over some -though not all- of the productions costs. Our recommendation aims to remedy this situation through the following mechanisms.

We recommend that prior to the signing of the Charter, a focus group be put in place. The group would involve Program and Communications staff (veterans of the Collection process) and new staff (both the writer and his/her manager) interested in working on the potential project. The findings of the Research – Policy studies for the Centre could be integrated into an M&E component from the start. The purpose of the discussion would be to offer a full opportunity for those wanting to be involved in a new project initiative to discuss the **work load** and expectations with people who had experienced the process.

The budget could include an estimate of person days by each participating unit (Program, Communications, and Evaluation) along with the financial investments that each unit can contribute. There is ample scope to introduce another player here. The Communication for Development expertise at IDRC would be of direct relevance to audience research and to support the capacity development of field partners interested in doing local materials production.

This approach to budgeting has the following potential benefits:

- It creates a common project for several distinct units, thus establishing a cross-cultural opportunity, this time also including Evaluation.
- It calls on all the parties to focus resources where the outcomes are most urgent and likely to take place: each item influences the other.
- Adjustments are inevitable after the audience research phase, yet the tool allows the team to adjust time and budget allocations according to these findings.
- In-country production can be included in this budget or calculated separately, following the same steps and principles.

Develop a distribution tracking system

Book launches at events have been a means to get the materials out, this is a promotional strategy that is broadly targeted and, while it does position the achievements of IDRC, the outcomes cannot be monitored. The following are suggestions that might help develop a tracking system.

A One third rule

Allocate 1/3 of the books printed for general distribution without tracking who gets them. Our findings show that readers like to have these materials for general reference and that they do position the organization in the development research field. This 1/3 would continue to be given out at conferences and launches, and by staff and regional offices as courtesy 'business cards'.

Allocate 1/3 that will be tracked in a general manner: buyers' contact information will be kept. On the other hand free copies will only be given out or mailed in exchange for basic information about the user. This information will be entered into a database for future M&E purposes. IIED keeps this system for its free Gatekeeper Series, where users are asked every second year to update their

request for the material by filling in a basic renewal form; in their case this service is provided to IIED by a separate contractor while printing and mailing is based in India.

Last, allocate 1/3 to be distributed through regional offices or specific projects in a targeted way, and with strict rules regarding the tracking of user information. The 1/3; 1/3; 1/3 proportion leaves room for variations, but what is important is the explicit setting of distribution decisions from the start. This applies both to Ottawa-based production and to decentralized, country-based production.

Sell or give away

In general, users will value a product that has a value attached to it, though this does not necessarily mean it is the user who pays for it. A clear policy of selling versus giving materials away is recommended. For example, developed country readers should pay full price, with a half price for students and non-profit organizations. All readers in developing countries should be able to receive the materials for free, with the exception of those working for donor or international development agencies that would also pay full price. For example CTA in the Netherlands has had a credit system whereby its readers are given a limited yearly point allocation to order information materials. This approach sends a clear message that the materials have a value and the users need to make choices. Users with access to the Internet will always have the choice of an electronic version.

Intern research projects

The CI forum inputs made it clear that a complete communication strategy is a significant effort over and above a publication and distribution approach. Moreover, there is a great deal of innovation these days in evaluation methodologies. We see scope to integrate emerging evaluation approaches with select In_Focus projects through research internships or even thesis research projects.

Tracking book utilization in Canadian public libraries

In terms of uses of the book by the Canadian public, IDRC could experiment with the Public Lending Right Commission's approach that tracks the use of books in public libraries (the current registration period is open from 15 February to 1 May 2007) <http://www.plr-dpp.ca/PLR/default.aspx>

Access multi-organizational initiatives on research/policy issues

It is not always necessary to go at it alone. There are other organizations globally addressing the same research/policy issues as a community of practice; this allows lessons to be exchanged and innovation through interaction. In addition to building up cross usage of in-house knowledge, teams engaged within IDRC could benefit from joining multi-organizational initiatives such as the Research in Use Program that currently hosts several UK-based organizations (<http://www.researchintouse.com/index.php?section=1>)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Terms of reference

1.1. Background

This evaluation will focus on one of the strategies the Centre's Communications Division (COMM) has implemented, in partnership with the Centre's Program and Partnership Branch (PPB), for communicating and disseminating Centre-supported research results. This initiative consists of a series of “knowledge pyramids” that present special thematic collections on selected Centre activities. Each tackles a pressing issue in sustainable international development. The Centre's experience is distilled and organized in such a way as to draw out important lessons, observations, and recommendations for decision-makers and policymakers. This evaluation will examine all aspects of these projects, from project development to implementation of the communications plan. Particular emphasis will be given to the following three In_Focus projects, which are the most “mature”:

- ***Fixing Health Systems*** — Linking research, development, systems, and partnership to reduce mortality.
- ***Health: An Ecosystem Approach*** — Exploring the link between the environment and human health.
- ***Seeds that Give: Participatory Plant Breeding*** — Agricultural research, seed diversity, and the fight against genetic erosion.

Other existing In_Focus projects as well as those that have been rejected or are in production will also be examined as part of this evaluation, with a focus on processes of development, review, and selection.

1.2. Intended Users and Uses of the Evaluation

1.2.1. Intended Users:

"An evaluation user is one who has the ‘willingness’, ‘authority’, and ‘ability’ to put learnings from the evaluation process or evaluation findings to work in some way. The primary intended users are those particular individuals or groups who are affected by the outcome of the evaluation, are in a position to make decisions about the evaluation, and intend to use the evaluation process or findings to inform their decisions or actions." See http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-58214-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.

The primary intended users of this evaluation are the COMM and PPB staff who were involved in the research projects featured in the “knowledge pyramids,” who participated in the development, research, and writing of the In_Focus books and case studies (etc.), and who have been and continue to be involved in their dissemination.

1.2.2. Intended Uses:

Determining the intended use of an evaluation at the outset helps the planning and process to be more explicit and focused. The more specific the evaluation questions are, and the more tied they are to intended uses of the findings, the more likely the evaluation will address the needs of the primary intended users.

This evaluation is intended to be both formative and summative. The formative aspects will focus on learning what has worked well and how future In_Focus projects could be improved. The summative intended uses of this evaluation will be to determine the results and influence of the In_Focus projects and the extent to which they are achieving their objectives.

This evaluation is also expected to have some process use, as some of the intended users would like to be involved in the evaluation process. The expressed commitment and interest in the evaluation process means that the evaluation should be carried out in a participatory and consultative manner.

1.3. Evaluation Objectives and Questions

1.3.1. Objectives:

- a) Assess the extent to which the In_Focus projects are meeting their objectives and aims;
- b) Document the results of the In_Focus projects (i.e., reach and outcomes) and analyze their influence; and
- c) Offer reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the process and outputs of the In_Focus projects and the communication and dissemination of the material in relation to the subject matter content and context of each field.

1.3.2. Review questions:

For objective a): Assess the extent to which the In_Focus projects are meeting their objectives and aims:

- i. Describe and assess the progress of the In_Focus projects towards reaching their objectives, as set out in the project documents and communication strategies; and
- ii. Identify any evolution in project objectives and/or in interpretation of project objectives, within each In_Focus project and, more generally, across the overall timeline of the three projects.

For objective b): Document the results of the In_Focus projects (i.e. reach and outcomes) and analyze their influence:

- i. Review each In_Focus projects outputs to date (“outputs” include published material, briefs, websites, etc.); and comment on their quality (“quality” as assessed in relation to the relevant fields, their relevance and appropriateness given the intended audience(s) and user(s), and context(s), and the purposes and objectives of the project) as perceived by stakeholders, intended audiences, users, and/or sectoral/regional experts; and
- ii. Describe and analyze the influence of the project through its outcomes to date (e.g. the project’s contribution to changing the actions, behaviours, and relationships of the users and target audiences); the projects’s reach (“reach” defined as how actors interacted with and were affected by their interaction with the material and activities of the project); the strategies that contributed to the project’s outcomes; and any constraining or facilitating factors (internal to the project, external to the project but internal to the Centre, and external to the Centre). This should take into account, but need not be limited to the contributions of the program to building or strengthening capacities of researchers, organizations, and research users, and the contributions of the project to influencing policies and/or technologies. Influencing public policy could mean (i) expanded policy capacities (improving researcher capacities to conduct and create use for policy relevant research); (ii) broadened policy horizons (increasing both the availability of knowledge, as well as the comprehensiveness of this knowledge); and (iii) affected policy regimes (the actual use of research in the development of new laws, regulations or structures).

For objective c): Offer reflections on the strengths and weaknesses of the process and outputs of the In_Focus projects and the communication and dissemination of the

material in relation to the subject matter content and context of each field:

- i. Comment, based on the evidence, on the extent to which the In_Focus process and outputs are consistent with the objectives it seeks to bring about (process includes; selecting a research topic, developing the team approach, preparing the communication plan, preparing the material, disseminating the material and planning how the material should/could be used); and
- ii. Comment on how the work of the In_Focus projects relates and compares to the dissemination of policy work by other similar organizations.

1.4. Methodology

The evaluation will draw from program- and project-level data sources, and seek to triangulate the data from multiple sources. These will include:

- COMM and PPB documentation: including PPB prospectuses and COMM strategic documents;
- Review of project documentation;
- Interviews with COMM and PPB staff, as well as consultants and project partners involved in the implementation of the projects; and
- Interviews/survey/focus group discussions with samples of target audience and users.

Using data collected from each of the above sources, the consultant will address the review questions outlined above.

The In_Focus Evaluation Reference Group (representing COMM, PPB, and the Evaluation Unit) will meet with the consultant to discuss and determine details of the methodology including final evaluation design, data collection tools and protocol for data collection, and initial data analysis to validate early findings.

The expected outputs of the evaluation are:

- i. A report prepared by the consultant of no more than 50 pages that responds to the three objectives;
- ii. A brief prepared by the consultant of no more than 6 pages broken down into the sections below. This brief is intended as an analytical tool for communicating the findings of the evaluation.
 - In_Focus Project Objectives
 - Methodology
 - Evaluation Findings
 - Issues for Consideration

- iii. A presentation to the Centre outlining the evaluation methodology and findings with attention to emerging relevant lessons in communication strategy planning.

The format of the evaluation report is expected to adhere to the Evaluation Guideline on “Formatting Evaluation Reports at IDRC” available here: http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-58450-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html.

Appendix 2. Biographical information about the authors

Wendy Quarry has worked in the Social Sector in development for over twenty five years. She is a communication and institutional change specialist practised in developing strategies for community-based approaches to environment, rural water and sanitation, irrigation and drainage, livelihoods and natural resource management. In this capacity she has worked for large donor agencies (FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, SDC; DGIS), the private sector and International NGOs (CARE, Canadian Hunger Foundation, CUSO). She has lived and worked for various agencies in India (the World Bank); Pakistan and Ghana (CIDA field officer) and recently completed a two year assignment with Oxfam/Novib in Afghanistan. As a former broadcaster (CBC and private radio), she was the recipient of an IDRC Professional Development Award (1981-82) where she learned to adapt her Canadian broadcasting experience to development communication. She currently works as a private consultant from Burritt's Rapids, Ontario. E-mail:

wquarry@magma.ca

Ricardo Ramirez has worked for over 20 years in international development. He started his career in agricultural development and worked with NGOs in Latin America and the Caribbean. He worked for the Communication for Development unit of the FAO in Rome for over 5 years and was later coordinator of Information and Communication for a sustainable agriculture project based in the Netherlands. In the last decade he has worked and researched the role of information and communication technology in development, with ongoing work with First Nations in Northwestern Ontario. He holds degrees in crop science, adult education and rural studies. He is an Adjunct Professor in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, where he taught capacity development and extension for two years. He works as a free-lance consultant from his home-base in Guelph, Ontario. E-mail:

rramirez@uoguelph.ca

Appendix 3. Work plan and time-frame

1. Develop Workplan
2. Collect data for formative evaluation
3. Prepare data collection tools for summative evaluation
4. Collect data (summative)
5. Analyze data (summative)
6. Report writing and presentation to IDRC

	Tasks to Be Undertaken	Objectives and Outputs	Time Frame
1.0			
		Collect background information on In_Focus projects to prepare workplan	
1.1	Prepare for and meet with IDRC Evaluation Committee	Brief background to project	
1.2	Review documents and meet with IDRC staff		
1.3	Request Evaluation Committee to articulate learning objectives	Learning needs built into evaluation workplan	
1.4	Submit Draft Workplan for review	Workplan outlined	December 19, 2006
1.5	Draft Reviewed by Evaluation Steering Committee		
1.6	Revise Draft Workplan		
1.7	Submit Final Workplan to Evaluation Committee		
		Workplan and Time-Frame Approved and finalized	January 10, 2007
2.0			
		Assess Formative (process) of In-Focus approach – what has worked well and what could be improved	
2.1	Compile documents and review		
2.2	Develop semi-structured interview guide for IDRC staff involved in In_Focus process	Established methodology for assessing formative aspect of project	
2.3	Conduct interviews with individuals involved in In_Focus projects (IDRC, writers, researchers, reviewers) to assess selection and rejection process	Data collection on formative aspect	
2.4	Set up focus group with entire team of one In-Focus project	Review team-building mechanisms; research process and writing process	by February 15
2.5	Review documented and informal communication and distribution strategies	Assessment of communication strategies – audience selection, distribution mechanisms and monitoring and feedback	
2.6	Review how similar organizations bridge the gap between Research and Policy (Pelican Forum and targeted interviews)	Benchmarks for comparison	
2.7	Review data collected and documented, initial analysis underway	Participative approach to process assessment	

	Tasks to Be Undertaken	Objectives and Outputs	Time Frame
2.8	Set up roundtable with Evaluation Committee for joint reflection on strengths and weaknesses of In_Focus process		
		Data collected for formative aspect of evaluation	March 31 2007
3.0			
		Design methodology for assessing results and influence of In_Focus projects and extent to which they are meeting their objectives	
3.1	Determine objectives, evolution of objectives and target audiences of each of the 3 In_Focus projects	Platform for determining outcomes and results	
3.2	Design overall In_Focus data collection tools and instruments and send to IDRC Steering Committee for approval	Develop overall methodology for assessing achievement of aims and objectives with each project and selected audience (triangulate)	January 12, 2007
3.3	Review with Evaluation Committee	Evaluation Committee approval of methodologies	
		Methodology for data collection approved and in place	January 19, 2007
4.0			
		Facilitate data collection	
4.1	Apply data collection tools		
4.2	Identify and hire and train local in-country researchers to collect data		
4.3	Review data collected from local researchers		
4.4	Travel to selected countries for face – to – face interviews		
		Data collected and preliminary analysis underway	March 31, 2007
5.0			
		Describe and Analyze the influence of the program through its outcomes to date (changing actions of users and target audience); project's reach; the strategies and any constraining of facilitating factors: researchers and policies	
5.1	Meet with Evaluation Committee to discuss emerging findings and jointly analyze implications and possible recommendations		Week of April 9, 2007
5.2	Analyze results		
5.3	Prepare 6 page brief		

	Tasks to Be Undertaken	Objectives and Outputs	Time Frame
5.4	Present brief to Evaluation Committee		
		Results documented and analyzed	April 15, 2007
6.0			
6.1	Prepare draft report		
6.2	Submit to Evaluation Committee		April 23, 2007
6.3	Re:draft and finalize report		
6.4	Prepare Presentation material		
6.5	Presentation at IDRC		
6.6	Follow up		April 30, 2007

Appendix 4. Data collection tools

The following tables address the formative and the summative evaluation components with a summary of data to be collected, sources, and data collection tools, which appear in the annexes.

A. Formative		
Data to be collected (and work plan No. item)	From whom/where	Data collection tool
Selection and rejection process (2.3) Definition of objectives (3.1) Documented and informal communication strategies (2.5)	IDRC Staff Involved directly with an In_Focus project Documents (strategic papers, emails, etc.)	A1. Individual / group semi-structured interview guide (Ottawa COM staff; Ottawa PI staff, Regional staff) [Drafted & attached. Pretested during Dec and January.]
Evolution of the objectives (3.1)	IDRC Staff in COM unit and select IDRC Staff involved with an In_Focus project	
Coherence, achievements, possible variations (2.4)	As many of the entire team behind one In_Focus project, including COM, PI staff, ghost writers, and other staff.	A2. Focus group guide. [Drafted & attached for discussion.]
Examples of how similar organizations bridge the gap between research and policy (2.6)	Staff of organizations (ODI, IIED, PANOS, DFID, etc.) and practitioners involved in evidence-based learning	A3. ECDPM's Pelican on-line Forum [Draft backgrounder and questions attached.] A4. Individual / group semi-structured interview guide [Drafted & attached for discussion.]

B. Summative		
Comments and testimonials on the means of access, ease of use, and relevance of the In_Focus Products; evidence of change associated with exposure to the information (3.1).	Target audiences for each of the three In_Focus projects Partners Researchers Decision-makers	B1. Individual / group semi-structured interview guide (decision-makers, policy advisors, researchers, students, NGOs, practitioners, CBOs, others). [Interviews done during our trips and by national consultants.] [Drafted & attached for discussion.]
	As many of the target audiences behind an In_Focus project in a given country	B2. Focus group guide (in-country). [Interviews done during our trips and possibly also by national consultants.] [Drafted & attached for discussion; B1 and B2 use the same questions for now.]
	Target audiences for all In_Focus projects globally.	B3. On-line questionnaire (Survey Monkey); email-based distribution using same networks as those used for book mail outs. [Draft attached for review.]
Examples of how similar organizations track the impact of dissemination efforts of comparable products.	Staff of organizations (ODI, IIED, PANOS, DFID, etc.) and practitioners involved in dissemination of advocacy materials	B4. An on-line Forum hosted by the Communication Initiative [Drafted & attached for discussion.] B5. Individual / group semi-structured interview guide. [Drafted & attached for discussion.]
C. Participatory analysis		
Preliminary findings	Evaluation Committee and other In_Focus partners at IDRC.	C.1 Group reflection on emerging findings from both the formative and the summative dimensions of the evaluation.

Appendix 5. List of people interviewed

Last name	First name	Organization	Country	Email
Carden	Fred	IDRC	Canada	
Carmen	Bill	IDRC	Canada	
Charbonneau	Robert	IDRC/DEAFAID	Canada	
Coyle	Mary	StFX U + IDRC Board	Canada	mcoyle@stfx.ca
Dale	Stephen	writer	Canada	stephen.dale000@sympatico.ca
de Paen	Renaud	IDRC	Canada	
Fleury	Jean Marc	WFSJ - former IDRC	Canada	jmfleury@wfsj.org
Herbert-Copley	Brent	IDRC	Canada	
Lebel	Jean	IDRC	Canada	jlebel@idrc.ca
Leppan	Wardie	IDRC	Canada	wleppan@idrc.ca
Mistry	Rohinton	IDRC	Canada	rmistry@idrc.ca
Mougeot	Luc	IDRC	Canada	lmougeot@idrc.ca
Schryer	Chantal	IDRC	Canada	
Stanley	Bob	writer	Canada	
Vernooy	Ronnie	IDRC	Canada	rvernooy@idrc.ca
Whyte	Anne	consultant	Canada	
Zarowsky	Christina	IDRC	Canada	czarowsky@idrc.ca
Rios	Humberto	INCA	Cuba	burumbun@yahoo.com
el-Fattal	Lamia	IDRC	Egypt	LElfattal@idrc.org.eg
Mokhtar	Ali	CDS	Egypt	amokhtar@nefdev.org
Laamrani	Hammou	IWMI	Ghana	h.laamrani@cgiar.org
Gallardo	Omar	FIPAH	Honduras	
Jimenez	Juan	FIPAH	Honduras	fipahyorito@yahoo.es
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Arredondo-Jimenez	Juan	U de Guadalajara	Mexico	jiarre1@gmail.com
Vazquez-Mellado	Rosa Maria	Inst. Salud Publica	Mexico	rvazquez@insp.mx
Boerma	Ties	WHO	Switzerland	boermat@who.int
DeSavigny	Don	Swiss Tropical Institute	Switzerland	d.desavigny@unibas.ch
Ceccarelli	Salvatore	ICARDA	Syria	S.CECCARELLI@CGIAR.ORG
Mustafa	Yasmin	ICARDA	Syria	ymustafa@cgiar.org
Shideed	Kamil	ICARDA	Syria	k.shideed@cgiar.org
Thomas	Richard	ICARDA	Syria	r.thomas@cgiar.org
Ishijima	Hisahiro	Japan health planning advisor	Tanzania	hisahirois@aol.com
McLaughlin	Julie	World Bank	Tanzania	Jmclaughlin@worldbank.org
Reid	Graham	IDRC	Tanzania	greid@tehip.or.tz
Thorpe	Peggy	CIDA	Tanzania	peggy.thorpe@ccotz.org
Upunda	Gabriel	former chief medical officer	Tanzania	kasale@tehip.or.tz
Myaya	Mary	Comic Relief	UK	mary@whatscooking.demon.co.uk

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Appendix 7. Survey questions (English)

Purpose

To gather comments and testimonials on the means of access, ease of use, and relevance of the In_Focus Products.

To document evidence of change associated with exposure to the information.

Target audiences for all In_Focus projects globally.

SECTION 1 – ACCESS AND USE

1. How did you COME TO KNOW about the In_Focus product?
 - Through my involvement with IDRC projects and staff
 - Through the IDRC website
 - A colleague referred me to it
 - I heard about it in a conference or book launch
 - It was mentioned in an on-line network or forum
 - It was hyperlinked from another site
 - Through an on-line search using a browser
 - I found the book at a library
 - As part of a course
 - Other _____
 - Other _____
2. Which In_Focus PRODUCT are you most familiar with? (CHOOSE ONE and stay with that one for the rest of this questionnaire)
 - Water
 - Health
 - EcoHealth
 - Seeds
 - Cities
 - Natural Resource Management
3. Which In_Focus MATERIALS did you access? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
 - Executive summary flyer
 - Book and CD
 - CD only
 - Case studies
 - Website
 - Slides
 - On-line video
4. How much TIME in total have you spent using the In_Focus materials in Question 3?
 - Less than one hour

- Between 1 and 3 hours
 - More than 3 hours
5. How did you use the material? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)
- I have not read the book yet, it is sitting on my shelf
 - I skimmed over it
 - I read it for general interest
 - I read it and made reference to it in some of my writing
 - I read it and used it as support for a training or teaching task
 - I used it to advise or brief a decision-maker
 - Other
 - Other
6. How many people did you REFER the product to?
- None
 - Between 1-10
 - Between 11-25
 - More than 25
 - I have added a hyperlink to my website
 - Other
7. How did you MOVE from one media product to another?
- I only know the executive summary flyer
 - I first saw the executive summary flyer, then I referred to the others
 - I first read the book, then glanced at the CD
 - I first read the case studies, then the book
 - I first saw the website and then ordered the book
 - Other
 - Other

SECTION 2 – VALUING AND APPLICATION

8. What is your LEVEL OF EXPERTISE relative to the subject in this product?
- I am new to this subject
 - I am quite familiar, but not an expert
 - I work in this field, I have extensive knowledge
9. How did you find the LANGUAGE and level of analysis?
- Simplistic
 - Just right
 - Difficult to understand
10. What did you most like about the product?
11. What did your find most disappointing?

12. Which of the following best describes your perspective after reading this In_Focus product? (CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

- I am able to define and identify the major facts regarding the topic.
- I can interpret, differentiate and understand meanings that are new to me.
- I can now determine and predict new and concrete situations on this topic.
- I can discriminate, analyze and prioritize issues regarding the topic.
- I can synthesize, validate, interpret and reframe issues regarding the topic.

13. Under which of the following SCENARIOS would you most likely use this In_Focus product?

- If assigned onto a committee or taskforce on the topic
- If my boss asked for a brief on this topic
- If I were to change job to something closer to the topic
- If I were to teach a course
- Other
- Other

14. If you have other comments or suggestions for improvements, please add them below.

SECTION 3 – ABOUT YOU AND YOUR MAIN ACTIVITY

15. About the POSITION you have had for the last year or more...

- High level decision-maker in my organization (director, manager)
- Advisor to a decision-maker (policy advisor, technical staff)
- Researcher, professor, teacher
- Student
- Journalist, member of the media
- Self-employed
- Other

16. About your ORGANIZATION

- Bilateral and Multilateral organization
- Regional organization
- Public sector – national level
- Public sector - provincial, district, county and below
- Private, for profit company (large 26 or more employees)
- Private, for profit company (medium, 6 - 25 employees)
- Small company (less than 5 employees)
- Labour union, farmer association, cooperative
- International non-governmental organization
- National non-governmental organization

- Community based organization
- Public education
- Private education and training
- Unaffiliated individual
- Other

17. Main SECTOR

- Natural resource management (agriculture, forestry, watersheds, fishery)
- Primary and secondary education (primary and secondary)
- Higher education (technical college, university)
- Health
- Communication, media, technology
- Planning (rural, peri-urban, urban)
- Trade and commerce
- Legal and financial
- Other

18. Gender

F
M

19. Country where you lived for the last year

Appendix 8. Acronyms

CD	Compact Disk
CDS	Centre for Development Services, Cairo
CI	Communication Initiative
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
ComDev	Communication for Development
COMM	Communications Division, IDRC
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU.
CTL	Closing the Loop
DFAIT	Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
ECDPM	European Centre for Development Policy Management
ICARDA	International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NEDG	New Economy Development Group
NGO	Non governmental organization
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PDF	Portable document format
PI	Program Initiative, IDRC
PO	Program Officer, IDRC
PPB	Programs and Partnership Branch, IDRC
RAPID	Research and Policy in Development Program, ODI
REACH	Reaching for Health Policy Initiative, East Africa
RIU	Research In use Programme
SC	Steering Committee for this evaluation
TEHIP	Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project
URL	Universal resource locator
WCCD	World Congress on Communication for Development

Appendix 9. In_Focus Selection Criteria and Charter

IN FOCUS COLLECTION: CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

1. What is the angle or theme?

The theme of the IN FOCUS project must reflect a particular aspect of IDRC-supported research from which we will be able to draw out solid and useful recommendations for decision-makers, particularly for advising policy.

2. Is there a solid and deep base of IDRC-funded research to support any recommendations, and is this research accessible?

Our IN FOCUS projects are unique in that they build on field research from developing countries, supported by IDRC. This needs to be manifested in actual online research content. This is the base of the knowledge pyramid.

3. What is our target?

Is there an event, conference, meeting or something of that sort that we can target to launch and publicize the IN FOCUS project? If there isn't should we consider creating such an event?

4. What are the roles and responsibilities of COMM?

COMM will take care of the overall management and implementation of the IN FOCUS project. COMM resources will be used to cover time and expenses related to professional writing, translation, editing, design, printing, and any other work directly related to the suite of products that, together, make up the information pyramid. COMM will also prepare and manage the implementation of a detailed communications strategy, outlining the products to be prepared, describing the target audiences, and explaining how those audiences will be reached.

5. What are the roles and responsibilities of the PI or PIs, and particularly the author?

The PI or PIs must work to pull together relevant background documentation and help to highlight key lessons, recommendations, and illustrative case studies from IDRC-funded research by working with COMM staff and COMM-hired writers. This requires a commitment of time and resources (some are choosing to do this by writing an RSA and hiring a consultant). An author (or two) of the IN FOCUS book must be identified.

In_Focus Charter

This project charter describes the objectives, deliverables, responsibilities, and targets for a new In_Focus “Knowledge Pyramid.” It is intended to guide discussions between IDRC Programs and IDRC Communications during project development and to serve as the project-approval document.

1. Issue

The issue of each In_Focus project must reflect a particular aspect of IDRC-supported research from which we will be able to draw out solid and useful recommendations for decision-makers, particularly for advising policy.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE? :

2. Objective/audience

The overall objective and target audiences for the project must be adequately defined and must reflect the Centre’s thrust to communicate to its primary audience of decision-makers and policy advisors.

WHAT IS THE OBJECTIVE? :

WHAT IS THE TARGET AUDIENCE? :

3. Research base

Our In_Focus projects are unique in that they build on field research from developing countries, supported by the Centre. This must be manifested in actual research content. This is the base of the knowledge pyramid. It must be strong, deep, and rich in research information from the developing world. The pyramid base will include project reports, research papers, books, *Reports* articles, PI Web sites, etc.

WHO WILL ASSESS THE RESEARCH BASE? :

WHO WILL DIGITIZE AND UPLOAD NEW MATERIAL? :

4. Original elements

A number of original products must be created for every In_Focus project. Every project, for example, shall include an In_Focus book, which will follow the standard content template developed by IDRC Communications. Other elements will include a detailed communications plan, case studies (optimally no more than six and preferably from different parts of the world), an executive summary, online slide shows, online FAQs, perhaps videos and video clips, etc.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINAL ELEMENTS OF THE PYRAMID? :

5. Target

There should be one or more upcoming events (conference, forum, workshop, etc.) that can serve as venues to launch, publicize, and disseminate the In_Focus products to the target

audiences. To allow adequate time for writing, production, publication, etc., the initial launch must be at least 9 months after the initiation date of the project.

WHAT IS THE PROJECT INITIATION DATE? :

WHAT IS THE TARGET LAUNCH DATE AND EVENT? :

6. Roles and responsibilities: IDRC Communications

- COMM will take care of the overall management, scheduling, and implementation of the In_Focus project.
- COMM resources will be used to cover time and expenses related to professional writing, translation, editing, design, printing, and any other work directly related to the suite of products that, together, make up the information pyramid.
- COMM, with input from the PI (concerning targeted readers, venues for promotion, etc.), will prepare and manage the implementation of a detailed communications strategy, outlining the products to be prepared, describing the target audiences, and explaining how those audiences will be reached through promotional and distribution activities.

WHO FROM COMMUNICATIONS WILL BE ASSIGNED TO THIS PROJECT, AND WHAT WILL BE THEIR ROLE? :

7. Roles and responsibilities: IDRC Program Initiative(s)

- The PI(s) will assemble relevant background documentation and will help to highlight key lessons, recommendations, and illustrative case studies from IDRC-funded research by working with COMM staff and COMM-hired writers.
- Working with COMM and RIMS, the PI(s) will ensure that all relevant background research that is not already online is made available for digitization.
- One PI team member will be designated as lead author and program champion. If a second author is identified, this author should be a Southern partner. The program champion will need to commit working time over the entire life of the project. The time required will vary from stage to stage.
- The PI will have a budget to cover those costs not covered by Communications, including additional consultant fees (perhaps for assembling background research) and any special promotional or distribution activities.

WHO FROM THE PI(S) WILL BE ASSIGNED TO THIS PROJECT, AND WHAT WILL BE THEIR ROLE? :

I approve this project:

Date:

Chantal Schryer
Director
Communications Division

Brent Herbert-Cople
Director
Social and Economic Policy

Appendix 10 Approximate production costs

The average cost of an In_Focus project has proven very difficult to estimate because the expenses are not tracked systematically. Often times, costs are charged to different program budgets - this is especially the case for translations, reprinting and mailing. The estimates below show an average production cost of \$77,000, though the variation is significant and related translation and distribution costs are not shown (many provisos apply to these estimates).

Item	Cost item	Product		
		TEHIP	Ecohealth	Seeds
1	Writing	15,000	30,000	18,000
2	Revising, edits			
3	Printing English	14,000	30,659	12,715
4	Printing French			
5	Printing Spanish			
6	Reprints	n/a	5,000	13,760
7	Design		5,970	
8	Translation			
9	Affix CDs into books		1,057	1,057
10	CD production			
11	CD duplication	4,000	4,215	3,914
12	Case studies E		21,248	11,170
13	Case studies F		6,700	
14	Case studies S	n/a	9,989	
15	Case reprints		16,689	4,681
16	Exec Summary E			2,585
17	Exec Summary F			
18	Exec Sum other			
19	Exec reprints			
20	Mailing			
	Subtotal	33,000	131,527	67,882

Provisos by Item

1. Ecohealth cost is higher likely because of the high number of case studies that were written for this project.
2. All revision and editing is done in house
3. E, F books + execs (*); Initial print run: 3000 English, 1000 French

4. E, F books + execs (*). The \$30k for E,F Ecohealth includes \$10k for AAs (author's alterations to proofs); the Spanish Ecohealth book was done as a copublication with Alfaomega (Colombia). IDRC purchased 1000 finished books, each including a CD, for US\$4200 plus shipping of US\$540. At the time, this was equivalent to roughly CA\$5000.

5. Seeds E,F,S books lumped together

6. Ecohealth: reprinted French books; Seeds: reprinted; F,S books and F,S execs. I would suggest that reprint costs be set aside, as they are not part of the initial costs of each project

7. All design is done in house

8. We are not able to report translations costs broken down by in_focus project

9. Split total of 2114 equally between 2 books. CDs were added to the Ecohealth and Seeds book post-production. For the TEHIP books, CDs were attached as part of the initial production process, and the cost is likely rolled into duplication costs

10. This is done in house

12. Could not track down costs for the TEHIP case studies.

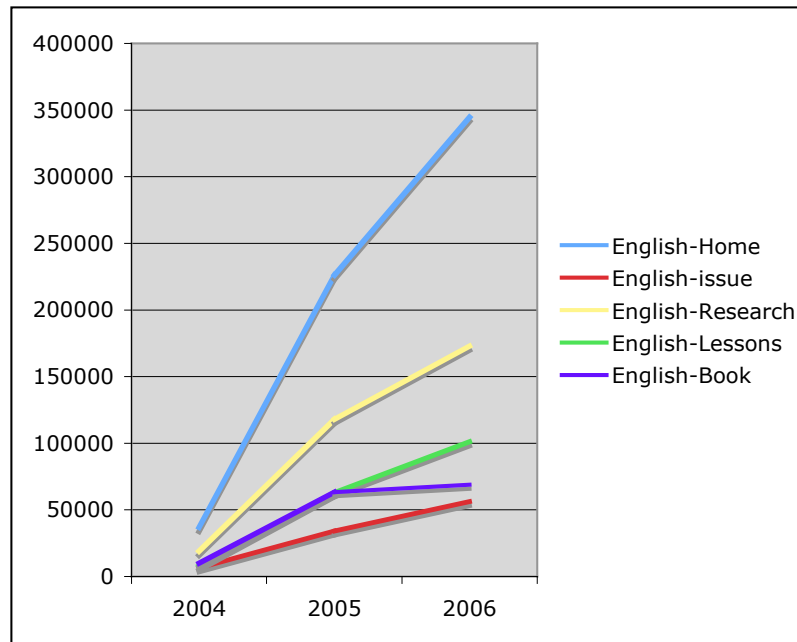
13. E,F,S cases together, different quantities. Note that for the Ecohealth project, 12 case studies were produced, and there have been reprints. Current practice is to hold the number of case studies to 6 (Seeds had 6 case studies), which means that total print costs will be lower. Per unit costs were not calculated.

14. Seeds E,F, S Cases lumped together

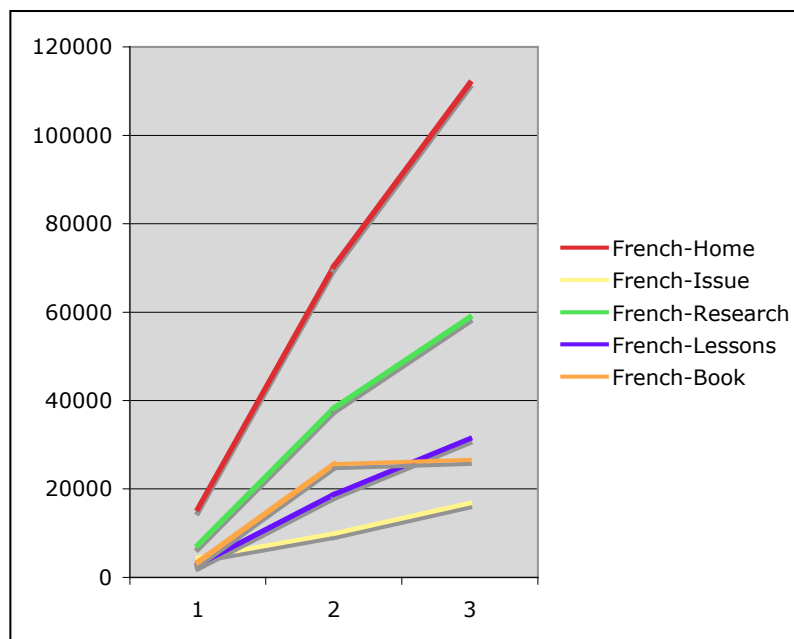
15. These figures combine language versions. Reprint costs can be considered separately. Some of this reprint work (particularly for the Ecohealth material) has been paid for by the Program.

Appendix 11. Web statistics

Fixing Health Systems – English (page views) – [includes traffic routed through the “Spanish” site which is still in English]



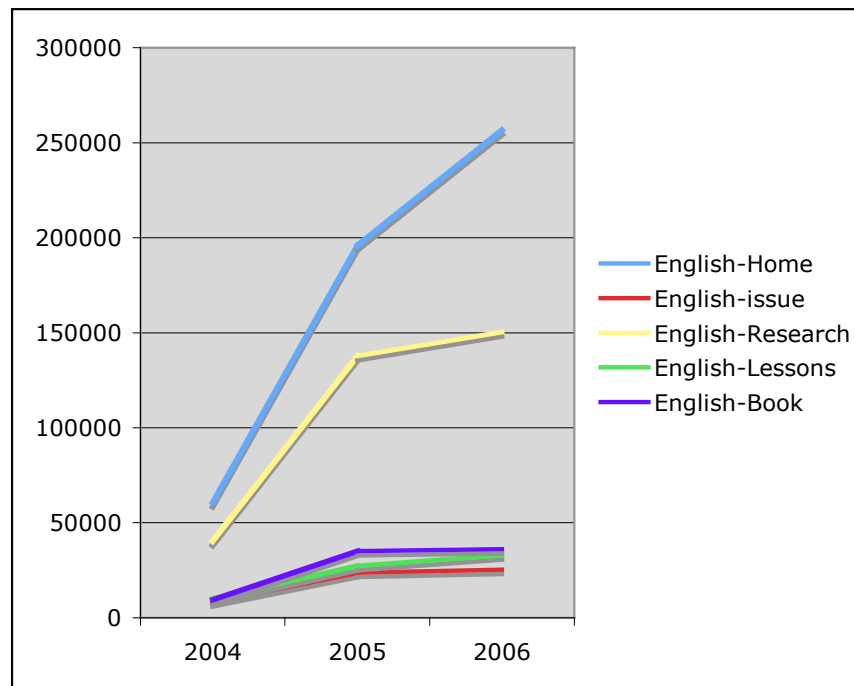
Fixing Health Systems – French (page views)



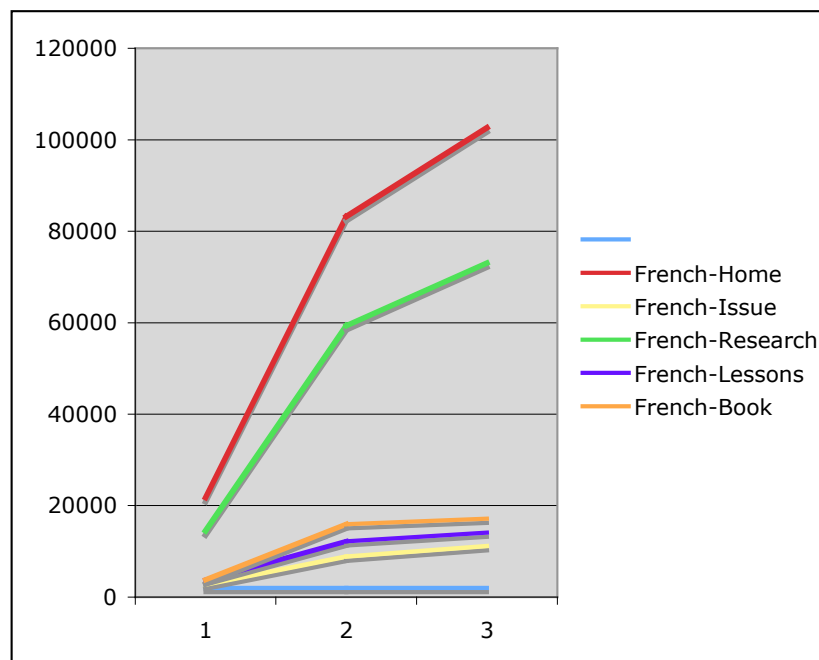
The graphs were generated from the table below.

Fixing Health			
	2004	2005	2006
English-Home	36890	226245	344567
English-issue	6475	34113	56105
English-Research	19037	118113	172822
English-Lessons	7906	62778	101192
English-Book	9903	63255	69057
	2004	2005	2006
French-Home	15543	70428	111773
French-Issue	4425	9921	16781
French-Research	7294	38240	58837
French-Lessons	2897	18768	31328
French-Book	3451	25593	26577

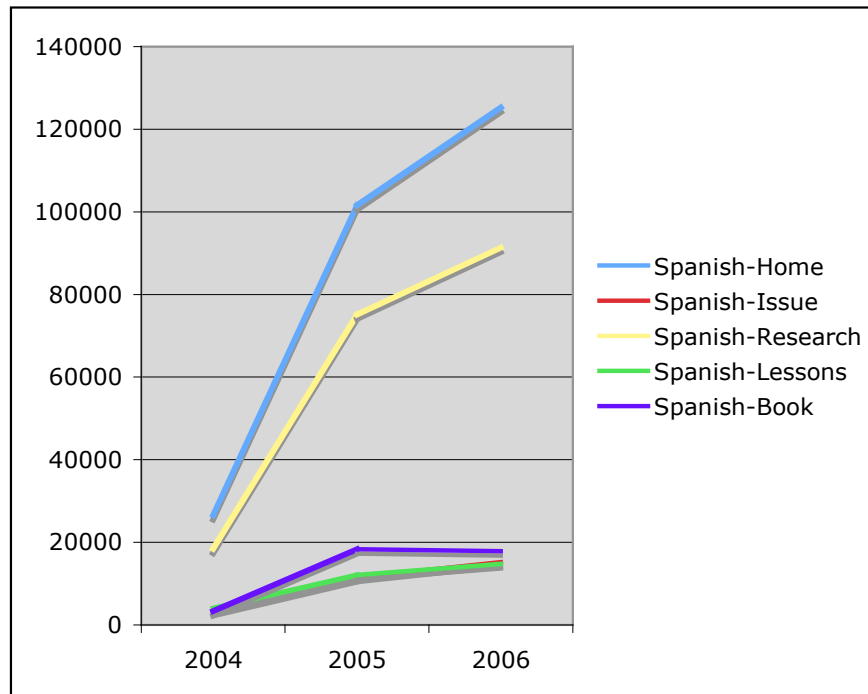
Ecosystem – English (page views)



Ecosystem – French (page views)



Ecosystem – Spanish (page views)

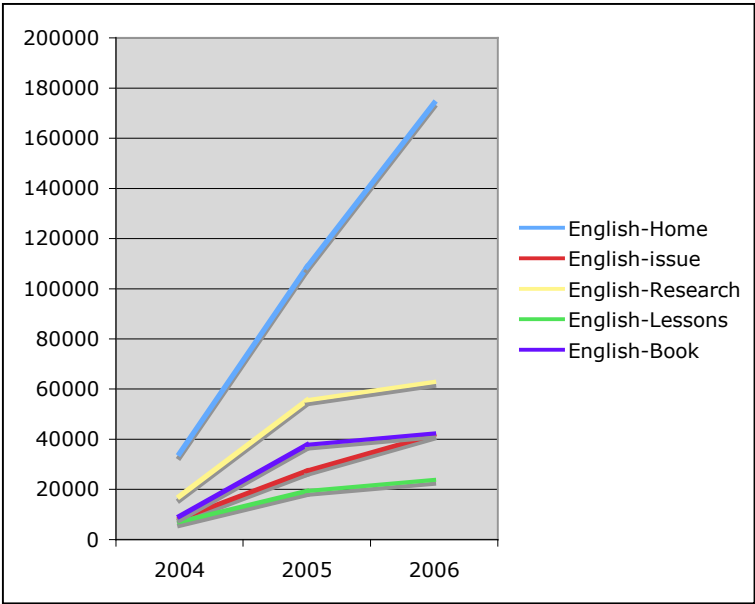


The graphs were generated from the table below.

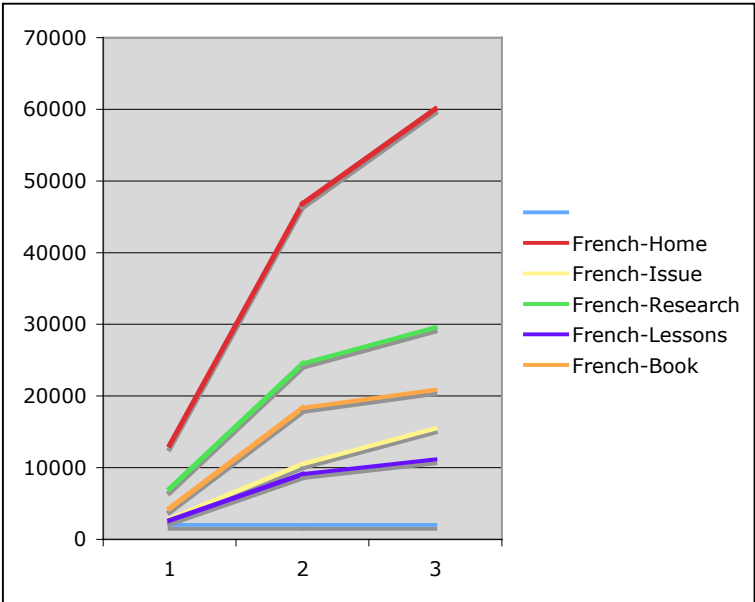
Ecosystems

	2004	2005	2006
English-Home	60645	196032	256600
English-issue	8324	23728	25377
English-Research	40435	137793	150424
English-Lessons	10136	27327	32871
English-Book	9508	35150	36078
	2004	2005	2006
French-Home	21740	83230	102633
French-Issue	2740	8863	11164
French-Research	14497	59348	73085
French-Lessons	3754	12171	14122
French-Book	3797	15911	17124
	2004	2005	2006
Spanish-Home	26580	101613	125250
Spanish-Issue	3266	11464	15172
Spanish-Research	18463	75196	91346
Spanish-Lessons	4059	12058	14784
Spanish-Book	3356	18307	17874

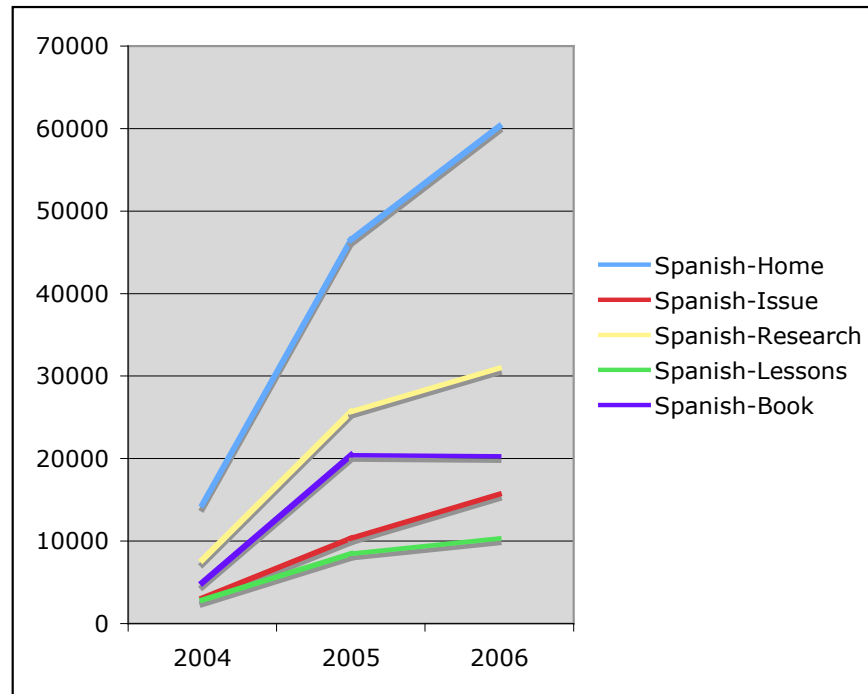
Seeds – English (page views)



Seeds – French (page views)



Seeds – Spanish (page views)



The graphs were generated from the table below.

Seeds			
	2004	2005	2006
English-Home	34357	108688	174030
English-issue	8241	27440	41757
English-Research	17267	55550	62801
English-Lessons	7087	19356	23776
English-Book	9334	37811	42301
	2004	2005	2006
French-Home	13163	46856	60018
French-Issue	2842	10518	15462
French-Research	7054	24513	29525
French-Lessons	2648	9081	11140
French-Book	4321	18321	20848
	2004	2005	2006
Spanish-Home	14425	46550	60254
Spanish-Issue	3101	10321	15657
Spanish-Research	7714	25678	30952
Spanish-Lessons	2848	8457	10302
Spanish-Book	4961	20418	20265

Appendix 12. Coded responses to Questions 10, 11 & 14

Question 10. What did you most like about the product?

Code	#	Statement
access	46	Access online
access	32	accessibility at low or no cost
access	43	accessible for a broad audience
access	55	free access
access	53	the global free access
case studies	1	Case Studies
case studies	2	the varieties
case studies	45	great case studies
case studies	51	Inclusion of several case studies
case studies	12	sharing success stories
case studies	37	the lay out and the case studies
concepts	47	A consolidation of concepts
concepts	28	a good summary
concepts	56	comprehensive
concepts	54	Comprehensive explanations
concepts	8	contents
concepts	60	El enfoque para lograr estabilidad ecologica y productiva
concepts	31	good balance between concept and practice
concepts	23	How it linked technical aspects of the research w/ larger questions of social setting & why same intervention can work differently in different settings
concepts	10	informative
concepts	35	informative cases
concepts	6	its mulit-faceted nature
concepts	65	les leçons
concepts	14	relavance
concepts	30	relevant to the current work
concepts	59	su enfoque
concepts	38	The approach to the lessons learned
concepts	22	The comprehensiveness of the analysis
concepts	42	THE METHODOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

concepts	27	the representation of the problems & the sorts of solutions & processes required to address them
concepts	9	wealth of knowledge in it
		Approach combining socio-econ w/ bio-phys. factors when analysing community health status & combining to get sustainable solutns. to health
concepts	26	problems
gen -	63	rien
gen +	3	all
gen +	18	I like them most
gen +	52	love the field
style	44	approach
style	25	brief & user-friendly
style	20	Clarity
style	5	clarity and use of evidence,
style	67	Démarche pédagogique
style	50	easy to read
style	7	easy to read and accessible to partners
style	36	Easy to read, good overview
style	40	Excellent photos; clear explanations
style	39	informative, well written
style	41	Its clarity
style	58	La claridad de la información
style	66	la methodologie d'approche
style	64	le language simple et accessible
style	61	Lo sintético y que esté en varios idiomas
style	19	Quick to read and accessible
style	33	readability
style	11	simplicity
style	13	sucinct
style	49	The clear and coherence of the information
style	48	The clear information on it
style	15	the clear messages of lessons and recommendations
style	16	the concise analysis
target+format	29	Can target different audiences
target+format	21	indexation
target+format	62	livre de poche facile à manier
target+format	4	the general presentation
target+format	24	The tiered format

target+format	34	The variety of media used
target+format	57	well adapted to a very broad public with divers fields of expertise
	17	N/A

Question 11. What did you find most disappointing?

Code	#	Statement
cases	18	Relatively shallow case studies
cases	21	limited scope of the case studies
cases	50	études de cas trop courtes
concepts	3	its limited bibliography
concepts	32	lack of details on data collection, methods and autocritique
concepts	34	the text does not treat the importance of education in ascertaining ecohealth
concepts	37	Would have appreciated more information
concepts	38	not enough concrete evidence
concepts	40	a bit of a rehash of prior docs
concepts	42	Verry real impacts
		the book was written early in the life of the program for that reason the impacts were minimal and in that sense the text is
concepts	44	lacking
implement	8	that i couldn't implement the lessons on Eco health
implement	12	cast in stone-public input?
implement	10	not so much on how the work was done
implement	53	Aspet pratique
none	2	none
none	6	nothing
none	7	nothing
none	9	none
none	13	nothing, actually
none	14	nothing
none	15	N/A
none	19	Nothing in particular
none	20	nothing really disappointing
none	22	Nothing
none	23	nothing really
none	26	None

none	30	Nothing
none	31	NOTHING
none	33	Not any particular
none	35	Nothing that I recall
none	36	nothing
none	39	None
none	45	nada
none	46	nada
none	47	Nada
none	51	aucun
none	52	rien
presentation	4	no eye care ! It seems like a heavy, lengthy process. Is there a lighter and more agile way of getting to such products?
presentation	5	
presentation	11	not enough diagrams web version was difficult to read, and I had referred others to it. Would be helpful if it were available as a pdf.
presentation	24	
presentation	25	The flyers as unattached
presentation	28	pictures
presentation	41	i don't have enough time to read them
presentation	43	long
presentation	48	manque de diagrammes et de figures
style	16	complex sentences
style	27	Repetitive (repetition within the book and repetition between materials)
style	29	Too simplified for my purposes
	1	increasing varieties
	17	sometimes a bit
	49	d'autre pays manque d'eau potable

Question 14: If you have other comments or suggestions for improvements, please add them below.

Code	No	Suggestion
?	1	ppp
?	2	no
?	3	I am not aware about the course you are talking about
?	4	Further information will enlightene me more
?	5	Having not read thouroughly the material, it would be dificult , and unfair to critique it. However if some forum were developed for public discussion, many of the possible disfunctional aspects might be avoided in future. Unfortunately, I have not yet had sufficient time to respond to question 12, but I was not able to proceed without answering the
?	14	questions.
?	22	RAS
cases	10	The case studies could be enhanced by presenting more data and results in addition to focusing on process results. Case studies from MENA region are not available. Future In_Focus documents will help address these issues and also disseminate the approach over this region.
cases	11	Why do I not have the CD? It was not distributed when the book was, at the conference at which it was given to me on its
CD	16	publication some years ago.
community	15	To more tools for communities in order to improuve their health
compact	19	it is good review of a theme in a compact format (for the book) the complementary the website is also very useful There is need to disseminate the ecohealth / ecosystem approach to health to the wider community through fyers and brochures (popular versions)so that policy makers and communities take up the approach. The IDRC website on which most of this information can be obtained is accessed by few especially in developing countries where ICT is just taking root. This could be done through the
distribution	12	IDRC regional offices in collaboration with the Ministries of health in respective countries.
none	25	aucune
pleased	17	It is always important to evaluate these products. Mis respuestas en la pregunta 12 hacen relación a la necesidad de seguir discutiendo sobre el paradigma del enfoque ecosistémico (aportes y limitaciones). Precisamente este material permite despertar la sición en este campo y eso ya es un logro de la publicación.
pleased	21	

		I didn't call it "disappointments" in item 11 above. However; I do think these products (Book, CD, Fliers, etc...) should make sure to present practical and easily digested outlines on how we put into action pillars like: Transdisciplinarity, participation and community involvement from the begining and Impacting policy and decision-making process. I am sure that Ecohealth projects have succeeded at least partially in that but this will have to be reflected in "In-Focus" materials in a more practical manner
practical	18	
too soon	9	I Just begin.
too soon	23	c'est encore tres tot pour les suggestions.
translate	6	finding the funds to translate these in-focus books into Arabic is sometimes difficult
update	20	The ecohealth bok needs to be updated
video	24	mettre la video lisible sur window média ou realy player
		I project I am commenting on (Co-management) has a web site. If it has a book, I am not familiar with it. I use the IDRC web site
webiste	8	for a range of products, references and project details. I don't go looking for a specific "In-Focus" product.
	7	I am very satisfied with everything so far. Please continue the good work.
		Questions in 12 were answered on the basis of what the product directly enabled me to do. From my perspective the product is a
	13	useful, if limited, product but it will be useful to those with little experience or knowledge of the topic.